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Architecture of Power and Urban Space in a Divided City: A History of Official Buildings in Nicosia/Lefkoşa

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ABSTRACT The capital city of Cyprus, Nicosia, has been the seat of government and administrative authority throughout the island's history. The Lusignan reign in the twelfth century (1192–1489) was followed by Venetian (1489–1571), Ottoman (1571–1878) and British (1878–1960) rule until the establishment of the independent state of Cyprus (1960–1963). Today, Nicosia is the last divided capital city in Europe, serving the Turkish Cypriots in the north and the Greek Cypriots in the south of the island. The palaces, monuments and governmental centres illustrate how territorial belonging

and power were defined and reflected in the buildings of the city itself. The way in which the power of individuals, communities and nations is organized can be traced through the organization of space and the architectural forms of administrative buildings. This paper elaborates on the ideas and experiences of architects with regard to the ideational background, symbolic significance and relationship between art form and political power put forth in these buildings. Within this context, the paper reflects on the impact of divisiveness in architectural forms and aesthetics, the political use of urban space, the constructional aim of official buildings, the architectural styles that affected their design and the extent of the political authority's involvement in planning and design. Drawing on the oral testimonies of architects and archival materials, the paper highlights the connection between political power and the architectural processes that allowed for the contextualization of divisiveness that has dominated the architectural forms on the island particularly in the contemporary history of the island.

KEYWORDS: architecture, space, political power, official buildings, divisiveness

Introduction



Architectural language has been significantly instrumental in the expression of political power. In the case of Northern Cyprus, as in many others, the relationship between political power and architectural form has evolved in line with the political culture of the island's various rulers. The impact of shifts in the structures of governance and practices of political culture as reflected in architectural design and construction practices has been particularly evident in the urban design and architecture of Nicosia, which, as the capital city of Cyprus, has been the main hub of economic and political power throughout the island's history. The effects of the structural reorientation of architectural power posturing can be observed in the variations in style among the historical administrative buildings belonging to different periods of sovereignty under Byzantine, Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman, British and Cypriot rulers.

This paper aims to explore the shifts and continuities behind the power-symbolism, which has been revealed in the architectural form and construction of administrative buildings in northern Nicosia (Lefkoşa), especially after the ethnic division of the urban space in the mid-1970s. Within this framework, the paper reflects on the

impact of divisiveness on architectural forms and aesthetics, the political use of urban space, the constructional aims of official buildings, the architectural styles influencing building design and the extent of involvement by the political authorities in urban planning and architectural design. By referencing the oral testimonies of the relevant architects in addition to providing an analysis of archival material, this paper highlights the connection between political power and architectural processes, thereby contextualizing the divisiveness that has dominated the architectural forms of the island throughout history. In particular, this article elaborates on the impact of the *de facto* division of Cyprus in 1974 on the architecture of the administrative buildings in the northern part of the city through an empirical analysis of the views of the architects of those structures built and used by the policymakers and governing bodies of the Turkish community in Northern Cyprus during this period.

Literature Review

There is a growing literature on the historical changes and continuities in architectural form and use of space in Cyprus, with various studies having been conducted on the architecture of different historical periods, from the pre-Hellenistic to the Venetian, Ottoman and British periods and the Republic of Cyprus. Included among the literature are analyses of the architectural forms of ancient and contemporary religious sites (Stylianou and Stylianou, 1964), the impact of British colonialism on architectural form and practice in Cyprus (Abercrombie, 1947; Tozan and Akin, 2009) and the architectural forms of the divided city of Nicosia (Hadjichristos, 2006, Papadakis, 2006).

An increasing number of recent studies have touched upon issues related to the architectural forms and practices in Northern Cyprus since the *de facto* division of the island in 1974. Oktay has examined the Turkish-Cypriot community's search for an urban identity, elaborating the housing policies and organization of public spaces of the cities of the north and discussing the impact of local socio-economic and political dynamics on the urbanization process by referencing architectural practice in North Cyprus (Oktay, 2001). In a comparative study based on analyses of interviews with policymakers, community leaders and urban residents, Bollens highlights the local and international dynamics of urban policymaking and the bi-communal practices of urban peace-building in Nicosia as well as in other 'politically contested cities', including Sarajevo, Johannesburg and Jerusalem (Bollens, 2001). Hoşkara has also dealt with the impact of political conflict and conflict resolution initiatives on the architectural processes of Cyprus's Turkish-Cypriot community. By following their housing and accommodation policies over the course of conflict resolution efforts, the studies provide important insight into the impact of political processes on architectural practices (Hoşkara, 2006; Hoşkara and Hoşkara, 2007). Finally, in their 2010 article on

'Post-modernist hotel casino complexes in Northern Cyprus', Besim *et al* discuss the significance of the Northern Cyprus tourism industry's (i.e. hotels' and casinos') use of the postmodern architectural style during the last decade.

To date, no systematic oral history study has been conducted to collect, archive and interpret the accounts of the leading architects of the Turkish-Cypriot community with regard to the processes involved in the construction of the architecture of political power in Northern Cyprus. By assessing interviews conducted with some of these architects, this article aims to fill a gap in the literature and contribute to academic awareness vis-à-vis the choices involved in the design and construction of the architectural forms and structures representing the community's political power, especially after 1974.

Power and architecture in Nicosia

The relationship between political power and architecture has evolved over the different historical periods in Cyprus and is recognizable in the different styles employed by the Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman and British rulers in the island's capital city, Nicosia. The French Catholic Lusignan Dynasty (1192–1489) imported the French ecclesiastical style of the thirteenth and fourteenth century to the island, reflecting a political interest in transforming Cyprus into a Catholic military and political base (Özgüven, 2004). Under the Venetians (1489–1571), the governmental palaces as well as the residences of Nicosia's socioeconomic and political elite were designed and constructed in the style of the Italian Renaissance (Özgüven, 2004). The circular walls built around the city in the late 1560s to defend Nicosia against Ottoman attack have been an enduring symbol that has significantly affected the city's architectural identity and today are still known as the 'Venetian' walls (Given, 2005; Sennet, 2007).

Like the previous rulers, the Ottomans imported their own aesthetic styles and tastes into the architectural fabric of Nicosia through the construction of mosques, khans, fountains and townhouses (*konaklar*) while at the same time embracing different architectural styles within an Ottoman 'architecture of power'. Not only did the Ottomans change the architectural power configuration of Nicosia's political, economic and social urban spaces by constructing military, commercial and administrative buildings, by converting religious structures such as monasteries and churches into mosques, they transformed a Christian architectural power posturing into an Islamic one. The Ottoman identity was reflected in the city's residential townhouses as well as its official buildings (Given and Hadjianastasis, 2010). Notwithstanding the ethno-religious differences among the subjects of the empire and their reflection in the stylistic variations of their residences, the outer design and some interior architectural details, such as the presence of an official reception room (*selamlak*), especially among the socioeconomic and political elites, asserted their owners' Ottoman identity (Given and Hadjianastasis, 2010).

British rule over the island signified a turning point for the re-assessment of power relations and reconfiguration of ideological framework. During this period, the British administration aimed to show 'the Turks' how a province should be governed (Bryant, 2004). This objective was also reflected in the architectural policies of the Empire to a certain extent. The British era witnessed the emergence and dissemination of colonial architectural forms and styles with the further urbanization of the cities and towns of Cyprus. As a colonial tradition British rulers chose to live and work not among the natives, in the centre of the walled city, but in a military area outside the walls. A new entrance to the city in the south, the Limassol Gate, was erected in 1882, and the first public buildings to be located outside the walled city were constructed. Shortly after seizing a substantial political control in Cyprus in 1878, the British implemented a full topographical survey followed by a population census. The map of Nicosia, which was prepared by Lord Kitchener between 1881 and 1885, thoroughly demarcated the roads and settlements in the island at that period. Additional administrative buildings were constructed to represent British sovereignty over the island following its full annexation in 1914 and its receipt of colonial status in 1925. Although the British officials ruled the island at the offices located outside the Walled City and not among the locals, they needed a place to show their authority to the public. Sarayonu Square with its central location and with the new Law of Court Building (1904) in colonial style housed the official ceremonies and governor's parties (Panteli, 2005).

One thing that distinguishes the British period from the preceding ones is the extent to which the intentions of both architects and clients were documented. Especially from the 1920s to the 1950s, it is possible to trace the obvious manipulation of the architectural style of governmental buildings for political and ideological purposes (Given, 2005). During the 1910s and 1920s, the Greek Revival style was viewed as a symbol of identity possessing nationalist messages. By constructing schools designed in the Greek Revival style at various locations on the island, the Greek Cypriots were able to symbolically connect themselves to the classical Greece of the past. In contrast, when Greek nationalists burnt down the Government House in 1931 in a demonstration of their desire to unite with Greece, the British colonial authorities projected their rule by designing and constructing its replacement without any trace of Hellenic nationalism (Given, 2005). The riots against the government were in a way a milestone for the reading and understanding about nationalism in Cyprus that the British rulers tend to ignore. Designing and constructing buildings with local representation and showing respect to 'local' was commonly seen as the imperial ideology of the time (Fuchs and Herbert, 2000). Architect A. St. B. Harrison was the first choice of Sir Ronald Storrs, who was the British governor at that time. Harrison was the chief architect of the Palestine Archaeological

Museum, where he proposed to represent the styles of and histories of the Holy Land (Given, 2005). The choice of the governor was not coincidental. He viewed this as an opportunity to symbolically represent the colonial regime's prestige and authority and project his image of Cyprus. Not only did he decide on the architect but with an official telegram of June 1933 to the colonial office, he clearly made an intervention in the design process where he referred to the revisions of the new building:

The plans generally are very satisfactory. As stated in my telegram of the 26th of June, I should be glad if it were found possible to give a Cypriot character to the arches in front of the house but I recognize that they must harmonize with the architecture of the entrance porch and it may well be difficult to design a suitable porch with Cypriot motif. (*Cyprus State Archives*, 1931)

As Immerwahr has noted, most studies on colonial architecture define the colonial city as 'a dual city – one part composed of quarantined governmental areas featuring European architecture and urban planning and the other of native quarters, which were either subject to heavily restrictive preservation laws or else [...] ignored entirely' (Immerwahr, 2007). Nicosia belongs within the context of such categorization; in fact, during the colonial period, the city was composed of many quarters that hosted official buildings designed in a cosmopolitan mixture of urban forms belonging to the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities as well as to the Latin, Maronite and Armenian communities.

The first physical division of Nicosia took place in 1956 under British colonial rule (Drousiotis, 1998: 200–204) during a period in which the British were able to exploit interethnic differences that led to interethnic violence and the erection of a barbed-wire fence known as the 'Mason-Dixon Line' divided the city into parts. In 1958, renewed and more protracted interethnic violence emerged over the issue of whether or not separate municipalities would be established in a future Cyprus, which again led to a division of the capital. From that time onwards, the Turkish Cypriots established *de facto* separate municipal councils, although the issue of *de jure* separation was left open in the 1960 constitution (Papadakis 2006).

For Cypriots, citizenship in an independent state began relatively recently with the foundation of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. At this time, different to its previous usages by the Cypriot architects in the early 1950s (and even before), the modern architecture was seen not only as a style of architecture, but as a tool for representing decolonization. New schools, office buildings, markets, banks, factories and hotel complexes featuring exposed concrete, broken volumes and sculptural overhangs were built as symbols of a post-colonial, modern, independent Cyprus (Stefanos and Phokaides,

2006). The whiteness of the new buildings fractured the continuance in the use of traditional yellow stone. This had certain significance as an international code. The era of modernization in the island's architecture and daily life was simultaneously one that witnessed the beginning of political aggression, bi-communal conflict and division, and this unresolved political conflict was reflected in the organization of urban space. Starting from the early 1950s, 'Cypriotness' began to gain power in the minds of Cypriots. This development defined space among the Greeks of Greece and Turks of Turkey. Not only the modern architecture and urbanization but also the project of modernity changed the illusion of religion (Bryant, 2004). While architectural design and construction practices in the postcolonial period signified a search for a new architectural image for Nicosia that would reflect Cypriot independence from British rule, this architectural movement towards independence was interrupted by inter-communal friction that arose within a few years of the establishment of the republic.

Between 1963 and 1974, the Turkish political leadership was concerned mainly with the development of the spatial settings needed to protect and resettle approximately 65,000 Turkish immigrants from the island's south. Within this context, in 1965, the Turkish Cypriot Administration initiated the 'Refugee Housing Project' aimed at improving the living conditions of refugee families (Hoşkara *et al*, 2009). Thus, in this period, the main architectural policy of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership was based on the 'functionality' of the buildings constructed to meet the immediate housing and resettlement needs of the immigrants, and there was no serious attempt to integrate an aesthetic style of any political value into administrative or residential buildings.

After Turkey's military intervention in 1974, the Green Line was formalized as a border called the Buffer Zone, which was controlled by a UN Peacekeeping Force and divided the Cypriots and their city. The de facto division of the two communities following the military operation marked the emergence of new realities with regard to geographical and urban borders, demographic configurations, immigration and resettlement, housing, public landscape and infrastructure. A transformation of political symbolism occurred through the erection of new monuments and signposts, economic and sociocultural spaces of the two communities were partitioned (Kliot and Mansfield, 1997). As the city's former social, administrative and commercial centre lost the capacity to attract investment and public/civic services, the main socioeconomic activities were forced from the core towards the newly developing northern and southern sections of the walled city.

Division also meant the partitioned restructuring of Cypriot administrative zones and authorities as well as the dissolution of Cyprus's ethnic mosaic and the eradication of the urban unity of the capital. The space of the city was subjected to different plans and practices of urbanization on either side of the divide, as the political power

attached to existing buildings changed, especially after the need for administrative bodies for the Turkish-Cypriot community in the north. As major architectural elements, the Buffer Zone and walls erected in Nicosia after 1974 signified an important change in the configuration of the city's spatial structure (Atun and Doratli, 2009), and they also led to new architectural power posturing in the ethnically divided urban space. After the nation's division in 1974, the architectural and environmental quality of Nicosia's historical centre gradually declined. The centre became the edge of the city and the urban areas began to expand toward the north and south respectively. This new era also led to emergence of new architectural power posturing in the ethnically divided urban space. Faced with the necessity of forming new national institutions, new political and ideological attitudes as well as economic concerns began to influence the processes of architectural design and construction of the new government buildings belonging to the Turkish-Cypriot community.

Thus, as with many other divided cities (Mueller, 2005), the de facto division of Nicosia into two parts after 1974 seriously affected architectural practices and urban planning on both sides of the Green Line. In the initial stages of the division, ambiguities about the future of interethnic conflict prevented Turkish-Cypriot decision-makers from designing and implementing a long-term master plan for any 'post-Republic' urbanization of northern Nicosia. As a result, the early years of separation did not witness the rise and development of new urban architectural forms aimed at architecturally reorienting the town in economic, social, political and administrative terms.

The declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983 deepened the separation of administrative bodies. This divisiveness was consolidated with architectural power posturing on both sides of the Green Line and was reflected in the inability to effectively implement the Nicosia Master Plan that had been developed in the early 1980s. Following a 1978 agreement for the preparation of a common sewage system and a meeting between representatives of the two communities in October 1979, the plan, commissioned by the Turkish-Cypriot mayor, Mustafa Akıncı, and his Greek counterpart, Lellos Demetriades, under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (Bollens, 2001), had aimed to secure 'the improvement of the existing and future habitat and human settlement conditions of all the inhabitants of Nicosia' by coordinating infrastructural issues and ensuring adequate urban development in both parts of the city. The initial problems faced on the road to implementation can be blamed on political differences between the Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot authorities and the absence of the necessary administrative mechanisms and political willingness to initiate functional trans-boundary coordination (Atun and Doratli, 2009). With Nicosia as the capital city of both the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (and then the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) in the north as Lefkoşa and the Republic of

Cyprus in the south as Lefkosia, the urban space continued to mirror socio-spatial processes and the sanction policies of national and international powers (Harvey, 2003). Thus, interestingly, in spite of various practical interruptions and political interventions from the northern and southern Cypriot administrations, implementation of the Nicosia Master Plan has continued, and in 2007, it was even a recipient of the prestigious Agha Khan Award for Architecture.

Empirical Data and Methodology

It is commonly argued that architecture (especially the architecture of power or authority as reflected in the official buildings of the state) is rarely immune to the social, historical, economic and political contexts of the society in which it is designed and implemented. For most scholars and practitioners, architecture generally denotes and performs political, social and economic functions (Sandler 2004: 6). However, it is also argued that functional efficiency, technical features, structural quality and costs have significant influence on architectural design and construction (Sandler, 2004) and that in some cases these factors outweigh political and sociocultural concerns about the capacity of official buildings to symbolically represent through their architectural style the power structures of the newly established autonomous political system. This was mostly the case in Northern Cyprus, where the substantial emphasis on cost and efficiency meant that official buildings had, to some extent, a formal existence independent of the new political, sociocultural and economic setting from which they emerged. Although there were certain examples of architectural representation of the new Turkish patriotism and nationalism such as victory monuments and sculptures as well as some exceptional 'buildings of power' (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Court of Auditors), those architectural urban forms have been too scattered and unsystematic to represent the coherence of new ideology represented by the new Turkish state. In this respect, it is true that the architectural styles generally follow changing ideologies, policies and political debates. Nevertheless, in the case of Northern Cyprus, either those ideological paths were not internalized by the Turkish community or the decision-making circles of the Turkish community did not have the essential will and resources for systematic construction of prestige buildings and eloquent architectural representation of power of the new state.

Determining factors in the design and construction process include the nature of the artistic intentions and involvement of the architect as well as client intentions, budget limitations, involvement by governments and political bodies and changes in functional requirements as a result of changes in political structures. Comprehensive analysis of the architect's intentions for the design and the changes he/she urged to make according to the political, economic conditions is quite a new methodology for scholars of architecture. Until very recently archival materials, reports and the formal letters

between the clients – the policymakers as the decision-makers for the governmental buildings – have been the major reference points in evaluating the architectural policies in Cyprus. Thus, some scholars would argue that an oral historiography of architects cannot provide the full picture of the processes of designing and constructing architectural forms and structures. Notwithstanding their emphasis on the self-perceptions of the architect, architect interviews can offer important insight not only into the nature and scope of an architect's involvement in these processes, but also into the other factors that affect the design and construction of buildings of power. For this reason, the main sources of empirical data in this study were interviews conducted with four prominent Turkish-Cypriot architects who played important roles in the design of politically guided architectural forms in northern Nicosia.

The four architects were interviewed between April and June 2010. They were selected for being the architects who had designed the governmental buildings from 1974, the early days of the city's physical division, till today. Kutsal Çizgen and Senal Sarper worked as state architects, Ergün Derviş worked at the Evkaf Foundation and Kozan Uzunoğlu as an academician and practising architect. The interviews were designed as open-ended conversations consisting of 10–12 questions related to the details of the general historical conditions of the period in which they served as architects as well as the particularities regarding the nature of their relationships with their clients (political decision-makers/power circles) in an effort to illuminate the decision-making processes implemented during the construction of 'buildings of power'. Questions covered issues such as sources of financing; client motives; political and economic conditions governing decisions related to architectural design and construction; control mechanisms over the construction process; discussions held between decision-makers and architects during the construction process regarding costs, functionality and the representation of political power; and a comparison between buildings in the northern part of Nicosia with those in the southern part of the city and other European capitals in terms of the representation of political power. Discourse analysis was used to analyse data collected from interviews in terms of the main research questions of this paper, namely, 'To what extent do the administrative buildings of Northern Cyprus represent political power?' and 'What are the dynamics that influenced the architectural processes and practices with regard to the administrative buildings of the Turkish Cypriot community?'

Interviews reveal such information about many buildings of power in northern Nicosia. Among them are the Turkish Embassy, which was designed by Ergün Derviş and erected between 1974 and 1978 under the supervision of the Evkaf Foundation and with the financial sponsorship of Türkiye İş Bankası AŞ (the first national bank of Turkey); the Court of Auditors (2001–2004) that was designed by Kozan Uzunoğlu and built by the Ministry of Public Works of

the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is another significant example. The other buildings referred to in the interviews were designed by the two state architects, namely, Kutsal Çizgen and Senal Sarper. They both worked at the Ministry of Public Works, Department of Planning and Construction, where Kutsal Çizgen designed several buildings including The Ministry of Finance and The Ministry of Public Works between 1974 and 1996. Senal Sarper joined the design team later, where she designed the Interior Ministry. These buildings were designed and constructed with the decision of the Council of Ministers of the TRNC. They were financed by the TRNC as well as by funds provided by the Turkish Embassy in northern Nicosia. For all the projects, the authors of this article were told that the project was supervised and controlled during construction till the building is completely finished (Figure 1)

The main issues addressed in order to respond to those research questions can be listed as follows: the job provider, the decision-makers (about the project, for the realization of the project), the



Figure 1
Map showing the buildings discussed in the urban context of north Nicosia.

sources of financing, the procedures followed during the assignment of the project to the architect (i.e. competition or purchasing), supervisory role of the architects during application and construction, decision policy about the place of the building site and the function of the building and the discussions held between decision-makers and architects during the construction process regarding costs. Apart from the above-mentioned issues, other aspects addressed included special demands of the job providers and decision-makers for the representation of the power, priorities during the design and construction process (functional, economical, symbolical, representational), the satisfaction of the decision-maker and the architect for the buildings' functional needs and symbolic representation of power.

Architectural/spatial preferences and urban policies in the design process

Çizgen stated that following the Turkish military campaign in 1974 [and de facto division of the island], the priority of the Turkish decision-makers was to find any building for the governmental institutions and settle. Consequently, the institutions that needed space urgently moved into apartment blocks, houses or even shops which were rented and/or converted to house the governmental buildings (K. Çizgen, personal communication, interview, 9 June 2010).

The position of the site was not of primary importance during this period. One exception to the approach of functionality during that period was the building of the Turkish Embassy. The decision to design a new building for the Turkish Embassy was taken prior to 1974 and when the old building suffered damage during the political clashes, the design of a new building was seen as a totally justified decision. The only problem was that the original site reserved for the new embassy was very close to the border, so it was changed to a safer place where it was also closer to the presidential palace. After 1974, when the Turkish Cypriots needed a new governmental office, the tobacco factory across the road from the new Turkish Embassy building was converted to be the new Parliament Building. The decision about the site of the new Parliament for the new State after the de facto partition of the Republic of Cyprus to be opposite the Turkish Embassy was not a coincidence. The urban policy about the site of the building was in itself a strong symbol for the representation of political power (E. Derviş, personal communication, interview, 11 May 2010) (Figure 2).

It was only when the TRNC was founded in 1983 that a new neighbourhood to the northwest of the Walled City of Nicosia was reserved for the new ministerial buildings to be built. The Prime Ministry Building, the Ministry of Public Works, Interior Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs were built on that area consecutively, but again without an overall master plan (K. Çizgen, personal communication, interview, 9 June 2010). The lack of a holistic understanding,



Figure 2
The Turkish Embassy
Building, 2010.

and an architectural master plan compiling the official buildings to represent the prestige and power of new political structure in North Cyprus, was extant until very recently. Even though there were some exceptional buildings going beyond the general concerns of functionality and cost-effectiveness, the representation of power was never the dominant concern in the architectural preferences in the course of erecting those official buildings.

In this respect, as Sarper mentioned, there were no special demands for the representation of power and ideology during the design and construction stages. The main aim was to complete the construction as quickly as possible and to start using the buildings. Although Sarper, for example, proposed elevations, landscaping, these were details that could be ignored by the decision-makers, the minister and directors of the day. Only the porch for the entrance was constructed (S. Sarper, personal communication, interview, 22 May 2010). This point is also reinforced by Uzunoğlu. He stated that apart from the functional needs, the political authority only asked to have a porch to emphasize the entrance and wide stairs in the entrance hall of the Court of Auditors for the representation of authority. He said that the architects were asked if they could design the porch so that the VIP cars could park. He added that the auditor general of the day wanted the stairs at the entrance lobby to be impressive and they made a modification to the design to fulfil his requests (K. Uzunoğlu, personal communication, interview, 7 April 2010).

Functional, economical, representational priorities during designing and construction

According to most of the architects who were interviewed, the representational preferences, economic concerns and functional needs

are closely interlinked issues. Among them, Derviş prioritized the human needs and the functionality of the building. He noted that people were spending 30 percent of their lives at their offices. They must be willing to come to the office. They should feel that they are doing an important job and he/she is an important person. He argued that one should never forget that design and even the design of governmental buildings is for the happiness of human beings (Derviş, personal communication, interview, 11 May 2010). He thought that this approach was also materialized to a certain extent in the architectural style of official buildings that he had designed. He argued that most of the other discussions during the construction of the embassy were about the programme and functional needs. He said that he used materials and details that were suitable for the climate in Cyprus. The travertine coating that he used for the first time in north Nicosia was later repeatedly used by many other architects. He claimed that the only limitation came during the realization of a landscaping project where he proposed some features like fountains and reliefs on the walls to represent Turkish traditions (Derviş, personal communication, interview, 11 May 2010). Regarding the representational priorities of the decision-makers, Derviş referred to his dialogue with the decision-makers of the time in the course of construction of Turkish Embassy. He reported that the main concerns of the decision-makers about the building were its functionality but he objected to such an approach. He said that he tried to design something that has representational value so that foreign bureaucrats would always have good impressions about the building (Derviş, personal communication, interview, 11 May 2010).

Çizgen agreed with Derviş on the importance of the functionality of the buildings. However, he also drew attention to both the economic limitations and the other concerns of political decision-makers as job providers in the course of the construction of an official building. According to Çizgen, for the decision-makers and job providers, when there was funding for a new building, the priority was to complete the construction and to move in. In other words, each ministry wanted to get rid of the tenant status. Everything concerning symbolism, elevations, were negligible details when it came to economic limitations and functional needs (Çizgen, personal communication, interview, 9 June 2010) (Figures 3 and 4).

Sarper reflected on the relationship between the economic state of affairs and functional priorities as well. She argued that they, as architects, have had economical limitations so that their priority was to meet the functional needs (Sarper, personal communication, interview, 22 May 2010). Sarper also drew attention to restrictions on architects in the decision-making processes with regard to the representational preferences of the buildings. She argued that the decision-makers decide instead of the architects. In fact, as the construction is realized in stages, the minister may change within this period to someone with totally different viewpoints and



Figure 3
Prime Ministry Building,
2010.

sometimes the function of the building changes with totally new plan and programme. She asserted that when architectural, electrical and mechanical projects of the building are considered, mostly it is the architectural project that the decision-makers change during the construction process. They found details and materials for environmental control as negligible. This made it difficult for the architects to do architecture and to implement the architectural project as it was originally proposed. She argued that in the case of the Interior Ministry, they designed built-in cabinets to improve the spatial use and quality of the offices. However, their proposal was cancelled



Figure 4
Ministry of Finance, 2010.

for economic reasons (Sarper, personal communication, interview, 22 May 2010). According to Sarper, since the economic limitations and functional concerns dominate the architectural preferences and practices in the construction of the official buildings the representation of power had not been a priority in most of the cases. Therefore, the Interior Ministry building, which she designed, was not an exception to that approach either (Sarper, personal communication, interview, 22 May 2010) (Figure 5).

Uzunoğlu indicated another dimension of the triangular relationship among the economic, representational and functional preferences of architectural policy. He drew attention to the lack of long-term planning and programmes for the utilization of the buildings. He argued that when governmental buildings were designed, most of the time there was no specific programme. Therefore changes of governmental authority might result in a change in the way the building will be used by the new government and the by new departments that will be located in that particular building (Uzunoğlu, personal communication, interview, 7 April 2010). He exemplified this situation with the case of the Court of Auditors building. He argued that the use of building became an issue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Auditor General of the TRNC. However, according to Uzunoğlu, this was not only good example of a discontinuity in the use of the buildings by the state for specific purposes but it also was a struggle among the departments of the state for a building which represents power more than the other buildings. According to Uzunoğlu, the struggle between the auditors and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs demonstrated that the building had a value in representing power. This building differed from most of the typical governmental buildings, with its L-shape that welcomed people and that can be noticed easily from the outside. Uzunoğlu stated

Figure 5
Interior Ministry Building,
2010.





Figure 6
The Court of Auditors,
2010.

that they as architects, liked what they designed and they saw that the users took great care of the building, showing that they also appreciate the building (Uzunoğlu, personal communication, interview, 7 April 2010) (Figure 6)

Discussion

Despite the fact that architecture is considered to be a means by which political elites negotiate their communities' national identities and articulate their national aspirations (Ren, 2008), analysis of interviews with the architects indicated that the architectural forms and practices related to the buildings of political power in northern Cyprus were shaped mainly by concerns over functionality and budget limitations rather than power symbolism. Most of the architects interviewed mentioned the lack of political will for enacting an architectural master plan by which political power would be represented in the administrative buildings belonging to the northern part of the city. With some limited exceptions, the main concern in the design and construction of administrative buildings in the northern part of the island at the initial stages of separation was not to symbolize the political power of the administrative bodies of the Turkish community, but to provide services to the public at the lowest possible cost and with maximum functionality.

In fact, as mentioned above, the main architectural concern following the Turkish operation in 1974 was the development and implementation of practical, problem-solving architectural forms to meet the immediate housing demands of Turkish-Cypriot immigrants from the south and the military and administrative needs of the community's armed forces and political leadership. Given that the main strand of architectural activity in the north was concentrated

on the repair and renovation of conflict-worn buildings as well as the immediate construction of low-cost administrative and military edifices, the use of pre-existing buildings was included among the solutions to the immediate architectural needs of the new Turkish-Cypriot administration. From 1974 to 1983, rather than constructing prestigious buildings that would indicate the political and administrative separation of the two communities, the administrative bodies of the Turkish-Cypriot community tried to solve the problems of the community by utilizing existing buildings that had previously functioned as apartments and shops. Therefore, notwithstanding a range of objections from the architects such as Derviş, Çizgen and Sarper, the functionality and budget limitations overlooked the other concerns during the process of designing and constructing the administrative buildings in northern Nicosia.

The architects had many concerns and intentions with regard to design of the administrative buildings. Derviş, for example, desired a building of an architectural standard which would impress foreign bureaucrats in the course of their visits to Northern Cypriot administrative units. Sarper also wished to reflect her architectural creativity in designing and constructing a building of representational value. However, like other architects of the administrative buildings in North Cyprus, she was overwhelmed by the economic, political and functional preferences of the political decision-makers of the country. For Çizgen, architect's concerns about symbolism and elevations were simply sacrificed very easily and turned into victims of economic limitations and practical needs. In short, the architects were not very proud of creating mostly functional buildings without a high representational value. Yet, due to the restrictions exerted on the architects in the decision-making process with regard of representational preferences, concerns and intentions of the architects were not fully reflected in the architectural outcome. Those restrictions mostly derived from the economic and political limitations and obstacles.

With regard to the role of the central government of Turkey in the post-1974 period, contrary to the speculations that abounded among the local Cypriot population, Ankara did not directly influence the urban politics of Northern Cyprus or the architectural design of the administrative buildings. As clearly put forward by the architects, although Turkey was the major financier, the policies and projects of Northern Cyprus were designed and implemented mainly by the local authorities without any routine intervention by the Turkish government in the development of architectural designs and projects for the construction of the administrative buildings of the Turkish-Cypriot community. In fact, the Turkish-Cypriot architects of most of these structures considered the stance of Turkey's administrative authorities in the process of architectural design to be non-interventionist, with prominent architects such as Çizgen, Derviş, Uzunoğlu and Sarper stating that until very recently, Turkey had not

been directly involved in the architectural design, experimentation or power-posturing reflected in the administrative buildings in northern Nicosia, notwithstanding the extensive Turkish funding provided to these projects (Çizgen, Derviş, Uzunoğlu, and Sarper, personal communication, interviews, 2010).

Interviews showed that governmental buildings were designed mostly by state architects and that ownership belonged to the state, not to the specific authority that made use of the building. Hence, design and construction processes – which followed a programme meant to host a specific governmental body, but which could change with any changes in political power holders, especially after elections – might also have reflected the some problems of sustainability in the planning and implementation of political decisions. The design process of the Court of Auditors building was an exception, in that it was not designed by a state architect, and the building programme was prepared according to the expected needs of governance outlined in the constitution. Still, within the context of post-2003 rapprochement between the two communities on the island, several debates have taken place regarding the probable operational demands on administrative buildings that might derive from bi-communal representation of power. For example, during the construction of the Court of Auditors building in 2003, a mixed delegation of Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot politicians visited the building to assess the incorporation of functional architectural innovations that would reflect the bi-communal character of the building if a Turkish-Cypriot/Greek-Cypriot joint administration were to be established in the future (Uzunoğlu, personal communication, interview, 7 April 2010). For the most part, however, the exchange of ideas on architectural renovations and additions concentrated mainly on small-scale renovation projects (such as the construction of a bi-communal committee meeting room for up to 50 people), rather than any substantial architectural reorientation of the building as a whole (Uzunoğlu, personal communication, interview, 7 April 2010).

From the 1980s onwards, post-election changes in governments and bureaucratic personnel and structure have had a noteworthy influence on architectural processes and practices in northern Cyprus. One salient point noted by most of the architects interviewed was the lack of any construction of political power via a prestigious, spatially condensed ‘neighbourhood of government’ or architectural forms that might represent the esteemed status of the political power bodies in the northern part of the island.

Conclusion

The spatial forms, architectural styles, focal points and physical traces that constitute urban space correspond to sociopolitical experiences. In the case of Northern Cyprus, these sociopolitical experiences have been closely interlinked with alterations in the governing body and the use of economic resources to construct ‘buildings

of power'. In fact, interviews with the architects of government buildings indicated that the architectural policies and practices have been closely intertwined with changing ideological goals, socio-economic policies and political debates as well as the practical needs of the administrative bodies of the Turkish community in the north of the island.

Interviews indicated that up until the 1990s, expression of the political power of an autonomous political hub centred on the political aspirations and ambitions of the Turkish-Cypriot political elite had not been a major concern in the design and construction of buildings of power. In fact, the main concern of Turkish-Cypriot political decision-makers had been to meet the practical and functional needs of government institutions, and thus, most governing bodies were housed in existing buildings that had been constructed prior to the 1974 operation and designed not to express the political prestige of administrative circles, but to accommodate private businesses or dwellings. Even after the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983, this understanding did not change significantly. Although the development of a political discourse of the recognition of the TRNC coincided with the decision to construct new government buildings, only in a few exceptional cases, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Court of Auditors, could a slight shift be observed away from purely functional concerns towards an interest in architecturally representing the concerns over political recognition, which manifested itself in the emergence of a particular site in northern Nicosia reserved for a limited number of government structures. However, this small shift in the decision-making processes surrounding 'buildings of power' did not produce an architectural master plan for a true complex of such structures in a specific spatial segment of northern Nicosia that could symbolize the political power and prestige of Turkish-Cypriot administrative bodies.

The oral histories of the architects of the buildings of power in northern Nicosia frequently stated that the processes of designing and constructing these buildings were shaped mainly by factors other than a deep concern for the architectural expression of political power and prestige. In the absence of a master plan for the complexes and spatial design of buildings of political power and prestige, the architectural policy was largely shaped by budgetary concerns, personal intervention by administrative bodies, changes in practical needs during the course of building construction and the political interplay and bargaining between different segments of government, each aiming to make use of these structures for their own ministries.

To sum up, the Buffer Zone in Nicosia represents a division of two architectural understandings of power construction and power-building belonging to the Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot communities. In the south the Greek Cypriots continued to use the buildings of power from the republican period, albeit with some exceptions and additions. In the north, decisions regarding urban

planning and architectural design of the buildings of political power were initially governed by practical, functional considerations, although in time, concern over economic resources and changes in government decision-making circles also came to play an important role in the design and construction of these buildings. The oral histories of the Turkish-Cypriot architects of these buildings provided important insight into the relationship between architectural forms and practices and the expression of political authority in the northern part of Nicosia. A complementary study of southern Cyprus could provide a better understanding of how this relationship manifests itself in the divided city.

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