

auri research brief

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The Social Discourse of the Major Public Buildings in Korea since 1950

Introduction

Public buildings are buildings providing public services in society. Various principle agents participate in the construction process of public buildings, and can largely be categorized into architectural society and non-architectural society. The architectural society, rather than leading the project, provides services up to a certain phase. The architectural society is composed of professionals possessing expert knowledge of construction processes including program planning, design and construction. The general public not included in the architectural society belongs to the non-architectural society. The 'Public Building Design Work Standards' regulates matters required in the construction process to fulfill the public nature of the building as proposed in the 'Basic Construction Act'.

Therefore this study aims to focus on analyzing the discourse which has been in progress from the perspective of architectural and non-architectural societies regarding the construction process of major public buildings. Reviewing how the public buildings have been constructed, this study will seek the basic direction of policies and measures for the discourse regarding the construction process of public buildings in the future.

Research Framework for the Analysis of Social Discourse of Public Buildings

1. Definition and Characteristic of Social Discourse

The ‘social discourse’ in this research is defined as the discourse within the society in which the public building is constructed. The place of discourse can be categorized based on the principle agent and subject participating in the discourse. In this case, they are the professionals related to buildings (producer) and civilians (user). ‘Expert’ can be further categorized into policy maker, designer, technician etc. In this research, categories related to the discourse of buildings include newspapers, technical journals etc.

Discourse possesses historical and temporal properties. Discourse is continuously created up to the present during the process of building construction. In order to fully understand the discourse of a single building from the present perspective, a reenactment of the truth regarding the discourse of the relevant past, making additional discourse.

2. Public Buildings in Design Competition

Lee Sanghun (2013) has summarized the relationship among public building, discourse and design competitions as ‘Making the Norm of Public Building’. In the West, construction theory and knowledge system has been developed through the design competition, which played as the place of sharing public opinion between experts and civilians. In Korea, recognition of problems identified in the public buildings from design competitions has developed the theory and knowledge.

Initial Investigation of Public Building Discourse after 1950

Design discourse in daily newspapers can be categorized into subjects such as the delivery of opinions and requests from citizens and problems such as site selection or budget, comments etc. In addition, there are articles of opinions on the design competition system, introduction of the design competition candidates, and interviews with stakeholders’ interest.

The design discourse in technical journals covered the design competition winners, introduction of the judging process, proposals regarding the judging process and winning projects, the value and significance of the design competition, and the architectural value of the winner.

1. Architecture in The Professional Group and General Society

In the early 1960s, the story of professional group had been discussed in the general society. A statement of the architectural group about buildings existed as well. However, statements of

the architectural group began to be covered only by magazines.

Considering with the Gwangju Asian Culture Center, the gap between the professional group and architecture group was greatly reduced. This is because not only was the problem of demolition and preservation of existing buildings closely related to the design plan, but also architects began direct calibrations. In the past, the bureaucrat contractors only proposed plans after mediation process, but now they start to communicate directly with the public.

Although the interest in architecture and the statement were strengthened during time period status, this began to be presented in various forms by the media. As a principle agent which can be identified as the public and citizens, definitions about these was passed down differently based on the time period and building. For the Gwangju Asian Culture Center, this was 5·18 related civic groups and local residents.

Various public buildings discussed beforehand have been planned and constructed according to the purpose of the government owner of the building. Although it may differ based on the purpose, but it was confirmed that the majority were decrees from the president, pledges etc. Items due to requests from independent groups and cultural groups also exist for The Independence Hall of Korea and the National Museum of Korea etc.

2. Discourse and Discussions about Design Competition Policy.

Controversy about the design competition policy itself has also existed continuously. Issues about the qualifications of the design competition judges, the appropriateness of presenting a specific standard of the design competition guidelines, and value judgment for buildings were discussed repeatedly. The fact that outstanding buildings could not be selected was criticized as a result of falling behind the cultural period.

In the design competition held in the 1960s, major architectural subjects were diversified. The Korean Institute of Architects has continued to insist iniquity by continuously withdrawing from unfair design competitions. There was temporary confusion due to the participation of professionals from other groups. In the 1970s, Korean architectural groups established the 'Korean architectural design competition standard' through cooperation as a measure against the institutional sections.

Simultaneously stories from the perspective of the design competition MC were presented, with Kim Won a representative case. Various efforts including participation in projects by Korea Exchange, Independence Hall of Korea etc. has been confirmed by this investigation.

Through the frequency of articles covered in daily newspapers and magazines, 22 major public buildings to be covered in Chapter 4 were derived.

	Period (Design period)		Project Name	Number of Articles	
				Daily Papers	Technical Journals
1	1960s	1967 ~ 1968	Government General Office (Seoul Government Complex)	3	8
2		1968 ~ 1969, 1975	National Assembly		18
3	1970s	1973	KBS Building		7
4		1973	Seoul Citizen's Hall (Sejong Center for the Performing Arts)		10
5		1975 ~ 1976	Korea Stock Exchange		7
6	1980s	1983	Independence Hall of Korea		4
7		1989 ~ 1990	Daegu National Museum		17
8	1990s	1990	War Memorial of Korea		1
9		1992	3rd Government Complex (Daejeon Government Complex)		5
10		1995 ~ 2003	National Museum of Korea	4	6
11	2000s	2003 ~ 2008	Nam Jun Paik Art Center	11	2
12		2004 ~ 2015	Asian Culture Center	20	14
13		2005 ~ 2012	Han River Art Island	8	3
14		2006 ~ 2008	Seoul City Hall	4	12
15		2007 ~ 2008	Dongdaemun Design Plaza	7	
16		2007 ~ 2009	Jeongok Prehistory Museum	2	
17		2008 ~ 2009	Busan Cinema Center	6	
18		2008, 2014	Administrative City Central Town (Sejong Government Complex)		9
19		2009	Yeosu World Expo	2	
20		2010	Ahn Junggeun Memorial Museum	3	
21		2010	Gyeonggi Provincial Office	3	
22		2010	National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul	3	3

Analysis of Social Discourse of the Construction Process of Major Public Buildings

In chapter 3 categorization was based on differences in mass media. In this chapter, social discourse will again be analyzed through public buildings.

Although there is a time period difference after 1950, it does not mean that the preceding project has a causal relationship that affects the following project. At the present time, the 22 are also 22 stories that are separated from the epoch and exist individually. The following covers how the stories of each building were discussed with social issues.

1. Discourse by Periods

① 1960s: Government General Complex, National Assembly Building

These buildings symbolize administration and the legislature. As it is a large-scale public building, much interest has been focused on architecture. In the case of the Government Complex, the change of the design office due to the problem of the construction method of the client in the professional group was raised as a social discourse as it was reported in the daily newspaper as a major issue. Even in the case of the National Assembly building, inquiries about the design competition method was raised by the professional group, but was covered by the daily newspaper for a short period. Although there were articles about the progress afterwards, with specialized magazines presenting the overall issue again from the completion perspective, it was not covered by daily newspapers.

② 1970s : KBS Building, Seoul Citizen's Hall, Korea Stock Exchange

There were almost no discussions about these three buildings because the KBS Building and the Korea Stock Exchange were special purpose buildings with relatively little public interest. In the case of the Seoul Citizens' Hall, significant attention was required as it a large-scale cultural facility located in the center of Seoul. The introduction of the building only covered the fact it reflected Korea in its appearance.

③ 1980s : Independence Hall of Korea, Daegu National Museum, War Memorial of Korea

The Independence Hall of Korea received criticism about following the traditional appearance in design magazines, but in the daily newspaper the story about architecture was not covered as much as it emphasized its place as a building to educate about the history of Japanese colonial rule. The Daegu National Museum was only introduced with short articles in both newspaper and technical journals.

④ 1990s : 3rd Government Complex, National Museum of Korea

The National Museum of Korea, as a symbol of cultural facilities, received much attention as the first new buildings were planned. 3rd Government Complex etc. was only covered to the extent of its function being shared with Daejeon and the War Memorial of Korea was also not given significant importance.

⑤ 2000s : Nam June Paik Art Center and 11 other buildings

Discourse about various buildings were presented in the 2000s from the fact that before year 2000 there were 10 buildings but after 2000 there were 12 additional buildings.

One of the characteristics of the discourse related to the buildings in the 2000s is that since the late 2000s, besides the design, the story about construction is being covered. This is due to the emphasis on the explanation that the central government is also building in accordance with the government policies as the ‘green architecture’ emerged in architecture related policies. This includes explanations about environmentally friendly architectural factors etc.

In particular, the fact that 4 buildings (Asia Culture Center, Administrative City Central Town, Yeosu Expo, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul) were built under jurisdiction of the Central Government and the remaining were contracted by local governments, including Seoul’s Han River Art Island, Seoul City Hall, Dongdaemun Design Plaza, Busan Cinema Center, Nam June Paik Art Museum, Jeongok Prehistory Museum, Gyeonggi Provincial Office etc is notable. Following the enactment of the Local Autonomy Policy, various cultural facilities of local governments have emerged.

2. Discourse by Purpose

① Government Complex (Seoul, Daejeon, Sejong), Seoul City Hall

The Government Complex, as a body carrying out government affairs, utilizes separate building for each department, centered on the former central government building in Seoul. In the 1960s, it was integrated into the current Seoul Government Complex, and since then government departments have grown in size. The Daejeon Government Complex in the 1990s and the Sejong Government Complex in the 2000s restrained from the oversaturated development of the Seoul metropolitan area and proceeded based on the balanced national development policy. It was mainly dealt with during the planning stage in relation to the sale of existing buildings and the relocation of ministries. Discussions at the design stage of a building are minor compared to other public buildings because the space does not directly affect ordinary citizens. Compared with the fact that the disposal of existing assets to secure budgets at the planning stage was also shared with daily newspapers, the recent Sejong Government

Complex was dealt from the perspective of ensuring self sufficiency in relation to the process of building the Administrative City.

The Seoul City Hall was located in the center of Seoul and was a subject of great interest to the public and various discourse shared the overall construction process through daily newspapers. Sejong Government Complex was mainly dealt with in daily newspapers from the perspective of ensuring self sufficiency in tandem with the construction of the Administrative City etc.

② Museums, Art Museums and Memorials

Museums, art museums and memorials were mainly promoted in connection with cultural policies of central and local governments. In addition to being a large-scale business, there was significant interest in the construction process because the citizens would use the facilities often. Relating to the Independence Memorial Hall etc, the ordinary citizens empathized with the building as a place of education about the Japan's historical distortions and raised awareness of the fact that they were participating in the project by national citizen's fundraiser etc. Although there was controversy about the design concept in the architectural society, but it was not covered in the daily newspapers. The concept of designers etc of the National Museum of Korea, as a representative cultural facility at the national level, was covered by various daily newspapers and journals. In the 2000s, the Asia Culture Center showed that designers were directly involved in the process of persuading and discussing the needs of local society throughout the course of the project, and this was also a major feature covered in the daily newspapers. Projects such as the Nam June Paik Art Center, Jeongok Prehistory Museum and Busan Cinema Center, which were promoted in Gyeonggi and Busan, were conducted as means to create symbolic buildings to promote local tourism through architecture. Although not addressed in daily newspapers, the purpose of local cultural policy, design competitions and future prospects were covered from the perspective of local identity by technical journals.

Discussions were conducted regarding the Han River Art Island and Dongdaemun Design Plaza from the design phase regarding problems about the necessity of the project etc, resulting in changes in the project procedure etc.

Conclusion

In this study, the discourse at the construction process of major public buildings after 1950s through daily newspapers and technical journals was analyzed. Although most cases showed little communication between the architectural society and general public, but since the 2000s,

it was possible to confirm the process of constructing buildings through such communication. The concept of design, which is the idea of the architect who produces the building, was dealt with in technical journals, but in the daily newspaper it was not covered except for some projects.

The following are necessary to form social discourse on public buildings in the future. First, it is necessary to provide correct information about the construction process. A consensus on the necessity of business in the planning stage etc is required. In the case of public buildings, policy consensus is intricately connected with the policy. In the case of design competitions, the aim and purpose of the design competition and the opinions of the designers need to be shared socially through a process in which they are sufficiently exposed before the judging process. This is because the possibility of change is reduced at the point when the judging is completed by the professionals and when it is opened to users at the time of completion. Recently, although the process and results were released through press releases, worksheets, and worksites, a ledger and evaluation related to the discussions and decision making of the public building construction process is required.

Second, it is very important for the role of the reporter as the subject to communicate the professional domain in the process of building construction and the citizen as the participant in the beneficiary and the user. Buildings possess sections that require the role of a professional with expert knowledge. In order for discussions to take place through consensus, professionals need to be able to communicate professional knowledge with the general public. At the same time, it is also necessary to make efforts for the person in charge of constructing public buildings to determine and reflect the demand of the general public. This may be done as a policy or institutional device, but it will be possible first through journalists in daily newspapers and magazines. At the same time, from the perspective of the citizen as a beneficiary of the provision of government services in existing public buildings, the role of citizens participating in the process of building public buildings is also required through active participation in the construction process.

It has become too complicated to determine the current architectural discourse through just Daily newspapers and journals. It is expanding as words and images, and not just by writing. It is impossible to accurately picture the past. However, it is being re-drawn as it continues to expand into various materials. Interpretation has the potential to be modified at any time through other sources, and the interpretation of this study can be reinterpreted in various ways. Future prospects for public buildings will enrich the discourse of public buildings by constantly expanding discourse.

To this end, it is necessary to study additional materials and media such as SNS and

everyday articles in daily newspapers and technical journals. In addition to the study of public building decision making through design competitions, media discourse research must be also conducted in the future.

Key words : Public building, social discourse, professionals and ordinary citizens, construction media discourse

