Globalisation Reflected onto Architecture: Tall Buildings of Ankara-Turkey

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Abstract. Policy switching, radical socioeconomic changes, integration and globalisation were started in 1980s. New urban space developments have been accelerated in 1990s and provided urban space identity policies in 2000s. Luxurious shopping malls, hotels, and ultra-posh residences within the city and gated communities on city peripheries have been formed. Thus, the urban geography, urban silhouette and urban identity are being converted through tall buildings that signify the created prestige, status, and power in competition with the global capital. By the globalisation foresight the cities which have gotten ahead of the nation-state was seen. The buildings that converted into a symbolic (iconic) global product leads to an advantage in the race for attracting global investments and tourism, on behalf of the cities/urban districts. This process, which was initiated haphazardly in Turkey in the 1980s, has been on-going throughout the 1990s and especially in 2000s by means of the re-structuring of the government on a neo-liberal basis. The process is concurrently observable through the tall buildings and/or building blocks which match with urban regeneration projects, urban zoning plan revisions and fragmented zoning plans. In this study, the new global world order is evaluated by their status and architectural properties of selected tall and iconic/ultra-modern buildings in Ankara.

1. Introduction

The choice to be / to live at high altitudes, initiated by people who settled at hilltops due to reasons of security, is still ongoing by means of tall buildings ascribed different functions and meanings in the field of architecture. To this end, high-rise and/or tall buildings have been within the goals of architecture as signs of power, wealth, dominance, prestige, and religion. Pyramids in Egyptian and Mayan civilizations, Ziggurats of Sumerians, temples in the Roman and Byzantine periods (such as the Pantheon and Hagia Sophia), Pagodas in China, cathedrals and bell towers in the Christian world, and mosques and minarets in the Muslim civilization have all, through their height, been signs of the level of civilization, culture and power. Tall buildings constructed in our present day for the purposes of

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Although there does not exist a shared opinion on accurately defining the concept of the high-rise, many definitions have been formulated. In the relevant literature, all buildings above 22 meters of height are defined as high-rises. The most distinctive of these is the definition devised by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH). CTBUH defines buildings of 300 meters of height or more as super-tall buildings. This council also decides on the results of the competition for high-rises [1]. In this study, a high-rise is defined as being multi-storey and high in the skyline of the city in which it is located, and as having a certain ground-height fragility and high-rise technologies and special structural solutions. In line with this definition, buildings
power and prestige and/or more monetary benefit, however, have been made widespread through modernism under the leadership of the Chicago School, along with social, economic and technological developments experienced by the industrial revolution, and, in the globalisation process, they have been regarded as a tool for existence in the urban competition environment. In this process of the nation-state being surpassed by cities which become trademarks attracting global investments and tourism to themselves in a competition, the architectural structure being symbolically (even iconically) a global product is a tool providing advantage. As such, between the global commercial architectural field and global architects of the new generation who become stars at a global scale or those leaning on them in joining the urban competition, a symbiotic (fully dependent) and spiral relation has also been established [2]. Zaha Hadid, Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Jean Nouvel, Rem Koolhaas, Norman Foster, Santiago Calatrava and Renzo Piano are remembered among this group of architects.

High-rise or tall buildings are not only a recent urban structure typology but also objective expressions of the city’s social, economic, political and even religious power signs of globalization. With their architectural meaning and style, their construction technology, utilization style, economic price, and their stance against the natural and constructed environment, high-rises impact the whole of the city. In some new city areas, the attraction of global capitalism can be seen on some buildings as if competing with their similar. In the post-1980s in Turkey, along with policies that fostered effectiveness in free market conditions, foreign companies and their local shareholders started to make investments that focused on urban value increase, primarily in Istanbul. Through multi-functional high-rises that structurally and spatially signified this change in the structure of capital at the urban level, new central business or living spaces are created and, as such, urban transformation is made to gain legitimacy. The high-rises at the core of this development are marketed through effective and widespread strategies based on the appeal of this new (global) lifestyle [3, 4].

From this perspective, the transformation initiated on the Ankara-Eskişehir Road in the 1990s and as an extension, the high-rises which seem to be the single choice for buildings may as well be related to globalization. This presentation will analyse, in relation to the capital’s logic or power, the urban space planning (or the lack thereof), the new architectural and urban space developed by new (or spontaneous, eclectic, avant-garde, mega-structure) high-rises, and the resulting new urban image and the new utilization forms it pumps during the urban transformation or the sprawl process in this axis. To this end, and as of this moment, the impact of globalisation on the formation of Ankara’s south-west corridor, its architecture and identity will be designated.

2. Globalisation and architecture

Globalisation shapes societies’ economic, social, cultural lives in line with developed countries’ economic goals, and it changes the societies’ inner dynamics. In this process, new capitalism attracts fluid capital (money capital) and big (global) capital groups directly to construction investments. [3, 4, 5] Cities, transformed into the most profitable investment areas for the unearned income sector so as to become the most effective field for this process [6] are expanding explosively everywhere through high-rise buildings that provide the highest unearned income horizontally at urban peripheries that especially provide cheap land and by transforming the horizontal into the vertical. Hence, in today’s world, and, therefore, in today’s Turkey, capital renders urban planning disreputable, and by regarding architecture dissimilar to other markets, it reshapes it by dragging it into global competition.

which become physical, economic, and technological reflections of urban power are paid attention to. As skyscrapers are in the “high-rise” category, the term “tall building” has been regarded appropriate for this study. Another reason for this selection is related to the buildings on this axis being of 25 to 60 storeys.
2.1. High-Rises as a Tool for Existence in the New (Global) Life

Globalisation is a broad and multi-dimensional process to be solely associated with the economy. Yet there exists the anxiety that, in this process, the socio-political and technological decisions behind economic activities are taken according to the interests of unearned income-focused global capital. It is evident that the actual problem lies in capitalism, which is experiencing problems of capital accumulation through limited world trade, expanding its market and its monopoly. Through new life styles created for this reason, a consumer and mass culture is being imposed to make investments more profitable [7, 8, 9]. The rapid development in communication and information technologies, on the other hand, serves this imposition by sharing global images and identities more and forcing old cultures into new forms by dismantling them or hybridizing local cultures. Certain consumption patterns along with global production of transnational corporations and the passion for trademarks that has formed into the disease/evil of the century (*mal du siècle*) has become dominant over every aspect of life [10]. In this move, the fluidity of capital shifts to the real estate market that is shaped through new urban consumer expectations [11]. The urban space, as a result, is reshaped through prestige-providing buildings branded by their height or iconic designs, marketing a “new living-consumption style” by the slogan “concept projects.” The spaces of this new life style, such as “plaza” offices, “gated community” residences, “residence” buildings, “mall” shopping markets, “boutique” hotels and the widespread “mixed-use” complexes, are designed in the form of high-rise or tall buildings, thereby rendering globalisation visible in the city and transforming into landmarks [3, 4]. To have or to seem as having prestige and vision, the urbanites are dictated to take up space in this modern landmark or in these buildings. As such, it becomes easy to manipulate, to increase and to speed consumption. In 2000s, public-private collaborations in line with this consumption-based life style rapidly reshaped the organization of urban space and new public relations radically. In this process, the use of the urban land centralization of the periphery and peripherization of the centre may be defined [12]. In this shift, high-rises become expressions of the new image(s) and the new urban culture and life. At present, high-rise buildings where popular public and/or urban activities (large restaurants and food courts, retail outlets, fast food centres, sports clubs, huge amusement and recreation places, and the like) are carried out concurrently (mixed use²) are located both at the centre and at the periphery.

2.2. High-Rises and image architecture

By focusing on urban value increase as an extension of deindustrialization policies, globalisation attracts large capital groups directly into construction investments through fluid capital (money). The large-scale production of architectural structures (such as office towers, world trade centres, hotels, housing complexes) to increase unearned income in the construction sector is a shared worldview. The global solution to realize this construction type is planning new city centres instead of long-range and large-scale planning or an individual city or region being planned [13, 14, 15] and, as in the case of Turkey, making zoning plan changes at the plot scale. Thus, cities that resemble each other with high-rise or tall buildings appear to be globalized, and are recognized with iconic architecture of these buildings. In other words, “the homogenizing effect” in architecture created by the similar high-rise buildings that demonstrate the dominance of global powers over identity is aimed to be shattered by means of iconic designs [16, 17, 18]. However, iconic buildings designed by star architects and their successors for the purpose of branding the city (and perhaps themselves) constitute the basic dilemma of the “architecture-(global) identity.”

In the recent years, development in materials and technology and energy-efficient design principles has brought novelty (modernism) to the design of high-rises along with iconic designs. Hence precautions in decreasing the carbon footprint of high-rises and meeting energy in the construction site

² Mixed use is an approach according to which various functions (residence, work, trade, management, and the like) are housed in the same land or building in relation to one another.
by renewable sources have become basic determinants in building design. Accordingly, various wind turbines, PV batteries/panels, sun collectors, unified heat and power systems and fuel cells are integrated into buildings. This renders compulsory not only the architects but also the engineers and investors to decide together on the building design (such as the Commerz Bank Building in Frankfurt designed by Norman Foster as a bioclimatic building -1997, and One Bryant Park Tower in New York designed by Cook & Fox Architects Group as an ecological building- 2009) [19].

3. Tall buildings of image of globalisation on the Ankara-Eskişehir Highway

Eskişehir Highway (Dumlupınar Boulevard) is a significant corridor that represents the global – consumer – culture and spatial change and/or urban sprawl in urban life through tall buildings that objectively signify globalisation in Ankara.

3.1. The New City and Image Fabricated on the Eskişehir Highway

With the wave of globalisation in Turkey in the post-1980s, urban space has been reshaped through many tools such as the freeing of the economy by neo liberal policies, the loosening of monitoring in the land and housing market, the strengthening of local governments in city planning activities, and the legalization of profit-based joint ventures. In this process, which continues by the restructuring of the government in 2000s, the development corridor on the Eskişehir Highway is economically, socially, and spatially segregated at the urban scale by its users who are mostly in the upper-middle and upper income groups who have recently become rich. This segregation is visible through the architecture and mixed-use of the high-rises. The production of earthquake-resistant buildings in the aftermath of the 1999 earthquake has given momentum to the formation of a new city centre and residential area by means of high-rises in this corridor, and has even legitimized the global capital’s investments in the construction sector. Large-scale construction projects continue to be popular by means of their widespread and effective advertising strategies, especially of their slogans for a “new life” and trademark ascriptions.

Ankara, and even the country, first met a tall building in the years of 1960 with a 76m. -high office building named “Skyscraper” (Emek Business Centre) in the city centre of Kızılay designed in international fashion. In similar fashion, the Atatürk Boulevard, Kavaklıdere and high buildings in its environs that connected this centre with the city’s prestige area, Çankaya, were built in the years of 1970. These buildings were those that the urbanites or those who happened to be in the area could comprehend and were familiar with (such as Turkish Petroleum Headquarters, 1974 - 100m.-, General Directorate of İş Bank, 1978 - 108m.). In 1989, Ankara’s first shopping mall and watch tower Ata Kule-125m. TUBITAK Headquarters -100m. in 1991, the first example of global capital, Sheraton Hotel - 143m. have become the landmarks of the city centre.

“The Ankara 1990 Master Plan” confirmed in the same period (in 1982), urban expansion was directed towards inter-city transportation axes and public institutions and university campuses were envisioned for the south-west (Eskişehir Highway) corridor, thereby initiating the building of high-rises around the Eskişehir Highway. The preliminary high-rises on this axis were located in the closest proximity to the city centre of Kızılay and sub-centres (Tunalı Hilmi, Bahçelievler), near Çukurambar3 at the intersection of the Konya and Eskişehir Highways.

Urban regeneration initiated in this field with the planned revision dated 1991 is continued, within a market mechanism based on unearned income, through sectional plan variables by means of increasing

3 Çukurambar transformed from rural settlement to slum houses in the 1970s, and from slum houses to high-income group residential location after 1991 [19, 20]. Along with urban development, transformation of such slum housing areas with high unearned income potential due to their locations is easily accepted by the society and their gentrification is deemed necessary [11].
the mixed-use building, density at the plot scale, and thereby the height [20, 21, 22]. Armada Shopping and Business Centre, in this area which has by now been transformed into the “valley of skyscrapers,” was the city’s first “consumption temple” and “sign of the future” (figure 1). The fact that the different urban life style (shopping, eating, cinema, concert, meeting, business life all in one place) provided by this building complex, which is 122m. height on Eskişehir Highway.

This new prestigious urban life has been offered to their users by MESA Plaza in 2004. The founding of CEPA Shopping Mall in 2007 and of Gordian Shopping Mall 2009, both of which embody implements for the whole of the city, has expanded the use of this method (figure 2). Tepe Prime Avenue, the design of which was completed in 2007 and opened in 2011, served the same purpose and used the slogan of a “new/alternative urban space for Ankara.” This building complex, comprising two towers of approximately 95m. height, hosting commercial and entertainment spaces on the ground floor in the form of a courtyard and street and office and residence units, has been a spot of attraction and prestige especially in business and urban life.

Initiated by the building of shopping malls and business centres, this development is accelerated by the transportation of public buildings from the central city to this axis (decentralization). Approximately 110m. high, the Halkbank Headquarters Building (today’s building of Undersecretariat of Treasury and Ministry of Economy) was the first tall public building on this axis. Its architectural project was acquired through a limited national project competition in 1983, and its construction was completed in 2001. The design theme for this building, too, was designated as a “multi-functional symbolic building.” Designed as twin towers in 1997, Headquarters of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB twin towers) were completed in 2005 and they became utilized in 2007 (figure 9). The towers are 140 meters-high and have 38 floors. In 2008, Medicana Hospital (80m.) and Bayraktar (Söğütözü) Tower (115m.) took their place on this axis as high-rises with various functions.

In the years of 2010, high-rises rapidly increased on this axis. In all undeveloped plots, high-rises, with their globally-appreciated slogans and concept-based, symbolic designs, entered into a competition for visibility at the urban scale. With the JW Marriot Hotel, put into service in 2011 and of approximately 80m. height, global investment corporations entered this place, and this was used as a marketing tool. It was designed by the American architect RMJM Hillier, the second largest architectural company of the world. The interior designer was English Frank Solano, is claimed to be intelligent and sustainable [23]. Next Level Building (Office, Residence, Shopping Mall), of almost
135m. height, was designed by Brigitte Weber, one of the new stars of global architecture, and it was put into service in 2013. The construction of the second building (113m.), right next to this one and with the same concept, was completed in 2014, and that of the third (100m.) in 2016. These buildings, along with Besa Tower (85m.), opened in 2015 with the slogan “a modern signature on Ankara’s skyline,” and Mahall Ankara (80m.), completed in 2016 with the slogan “Ankara’s only mixed-use project,” are all of mixed-use and have been completed through public partnership (with the Housing Development Administration). Ahmet Hamdi Akseki Mosque (with 80,000m² indoor space and a 20,618m² courtyard), the construction of which was initiated in 2008 and finished in 2013, is the city’s largest mosque where 6 thousand people can worship at the same time and where 30 thousand people can attend a funeral prayer, and it is one of the highest and most magnificent buildings of this axis. With Next Gate Residence (115m.), designed in the form of three separate mixed-use buildings and put on the market in 2013, high constructs on the Eskişehir Highway expanded for about 15km, thereby creating the image of a “city gate” (figure 9). It could be argued that the high-rises on this axis bear the anxiety to become “sign objects” in the city not only through their height but also through their iconic and symbolic design, and therefore, to remain within the urban competition demanded by globalization.

3.2. The Power of Globalisation to Homogenize Architecture and Its Indispensability in High-Rises

The fact that distances became shorter through the development of satellite technologies in communication also serves the purpose of widening the targeted clients the global capital has made acquire new living and consumption habits. As such, there appears the need for a newly developed environment in line with this development by people who have gone through social and cultural change. Under these circumstances, global powers foresee the expansion of the same or similar architecture everywhere around the world, in a way that would also provide the fluidity of capital. Referred to as the “Homogenization of Architecture,” this enforcement defines how globalisation has changed architecture [15]. This suggests that, by means of specific buildings such as office blocks, residences, shopping centres and the like that represent identity and/or power-prestige, globalisation has become recognizable in all far corners of the world. Homogenization is mostly actualized at high-rise, high-status corporate office, hotel and residence towers at new urban areas or centres created through the new (global) vision of urban development by means of the support or even partnership of global powers and the local elite with economic and political power. Star architects who develop this symbiotic relation with this commercial architecture that is becoming globalized design buildings that will become the signs of the city’s competitive image. As such, architects attach importance to applying or closing in global architectural patterns rather than the society’s (not) internalizing the structured environment to which they have added new meanings. This could be explained through global architecture’s iconic discourse. “New iconic designs,” through the blurring of movements and – isms, hierarchical categories, design principles and functions in art and/or architecture and the incorporation of an approach by individual designs which have a new and mysterious representative power and which can include many metaphors or a disorderly fashion in becoming signs are products of the competition to stand out in the globalizing world [16, 17, 24]. To legitimize global identity, nation-based symbols are frequently used on the façades of these iconic high-rises. These symbols, or the clothing of the façades with local signs, aim at providing social support for globalisation or at preventing reactions against global sovereignty. Taipei 101 (509 metres), which opened in Taiwan in 2004 as the world’s highest building, used the traditional Chinese symbolism of the “pagoda” (figure 3). Burj Khalifa (828m.), which opened in Dubai in 2010 as the world’s highest building, was designed as a reference to traditional Islamic art (figure 4), and Al Bahr – Twins – Towers (Investment Council Headquarters -147m.), which opened in Abu Dhabi in 2010, used on its façades and spaces

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4 Symbiotic relation is used here to suggest needing one another, co-existing, or to point to the relation between things that complement each other or mutually benefiting.
the geometrical mosaic pattern of Islamic art (figure 5) can be listed as examples to high-rises with iconic references.

![Figure 3. Taipei 101](image)

![Figure 4. Burj Khalifa](image)

![Figure 5. Al Bahr Towers](image)

Along with the iconic approach of high-rised, advanced construction technology (high-tech), developments in construction material (nanotechnology), efficient use or conservation of energy (ecological, sustainable architecture), or opportunities offered by computer programs at the stage of design is not be homogenization in architecture or pave the way for homogenization. Imitating or even copying star architects, or high-rises that are symbol of urban, national or even global scale, has also made homogenization easier. In other words, this framework points to how architecture has been deteriorated and re-defined by globalisation [8, 15, 24]. It can be stated that the high-rise or tall buildings designs on the Eskişehir Highway fit into this pattern and that this new public space to the southwest of the city is conceptualized by a marketable (commercial) architectural image. This becomes easily comprehensible through an observation of the spatial formation created on this axis and some of its tall buildings.

The high constructs at the initial point of this axis in the direction of the city (valley of skyscrapers) are becoming identical with the spatial formation and/or values in new centres (such as Daho, Taipei) created in the global world. Furthermore, the building cover design and functions scheme of some of the high-rises are very similar to some of the examples in Istanbul, and even throughout the world. The city’s first mixed-use tall building Armada Shopping and Business Centre was designed in the shape of a ship, thereby lending its name to the building. Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey and Tepe Prime buildings are twin towers, mimicking global examples. Next Level building complex is one whose new star architect repeats her designs in other cities and in this valley.

Furthermore - by the analogical method - the building cover design and functions scheme of some of the high-rises are very similar to some of the examples in İstanbul, and even throughout the world. Nevertheless, these buildings on this axis and in Ankara, therefore in Turkey, are not yet of the same standard in applying design criteria expected from high-rises, such as height and advanced construction technologies, and energy-efficient design. Designed through the iconic method, Armada Shopping and Business Centre (office tower of 21 storeys and horizontally a 7-storey shopping centre) is with its mass form of emblematic nature on this axis and at the urban scale. The statue-like mass of this building, which was the first mixed-use tall building of this axis, is a reference to the naval vessel, and it is for this reason that the building was named “Armada” to suggest the “pioneer naval vessel.” This iconic (and maybe ironic) reference may be explained through the city’s yearning for sea and through the leading, pioneering nature of the city as the capital. In an effort to create a new living environment for the urbanites, the building has been characterized as a “city within a city” project. The second shopping centre building, added to the horizontal mass in 2016, has aimed at re-constructing
the traditional street, market life (figure 6). Despite not being a tall building, another iconic building on this axis is the Hürriyet Newspaper Building which, through its “Braille” facade, emphasizes the global significance of human rights and communication.

Figure 6. Armada Shopping and Business Centre and Armada Life Street [28]

Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey and Tepe Prime buildings are twin towers, mimicking global examples. Next Level Towers, through their mass, the examples of which are available or overused around the world, their facade design, as well as their new star architect’s design for this valley, signify the entrance that separates the city and this axis. These towers’ iconic representation of the power of wealth is reflected, as if onto a mirror, by their monumental monolithic mass and facade design (figure 7, 8, 9). These buildings have been marketed to those who embrace modern life as the city’s “new (first mixed-use) living space, intelligent buildings and secured social attraction zone.”

Figure 7. Trump and Soyak Towers [29]  Figure 8. Next Level Towers [30]

Situated almost 12km away from these towers, and from the valley of skyscrapers, and based on the design theme of “novelty and difference concepts,” Elmar Towers (figure 9) are being marketed, long before their construction is completed, as a “magnificent project with their architectural status as being iconic not only aesthetically but also economically, and with their investment profit.”

Based on zoning plans, which are at the stage of being ratified, pertaining to the West Gate Towers (next to Elmar Towers) as shown (figure 9), to high-rise public buildings and to undeveloped areas (such as Yapracık and Çiçek Dağı), the high-rise formation on the Eskişehir Highway is expanding beyond the Ankara-Free Way (O-20, E-89) junction (approximately of 40km). As such, this axis is transforming into a racing field of ultra-modern, more luxurious, more intelligent, higher high-rises pumped up by globalisation as shown in (figures 1, 9).
4. As a conclusion

Within its limited framework, this presentation has tried to put forth the reflections of life and formation imposed by global capital on the Eskişehir Highway, planned as one of the development corridors of Ankara in the 1990s. The competition for rising higher, initiated at the starting point of this axis, named as “Ankara’s Manhattan” and “valley of skyscrapers,” is ongoing in an uncontrollable fashion in 2010s (figure 1). This development is best explained through the fact that these more gallant, higher, more attractive buildings are marketed even before their construction is completed (such as Söğütözü Tower Residence, Mahall Towers, Maidan Towers (figure 10), YDA Sapphire Safir Ankara, Koç Towers).

This competition is supported through alternative transportation modes (subway network, new main transportation arteries – such as Anadolu, Ankara, Malazgirt Boulevards) and public buildings.  
- Encircled by high-rises and/or tall buildings, this axis is the visual representational space of the city’s new identity. However, it is an attraction zone that is known and remembered at the urban but not the global level (like Doha, Dubai). Therefore, it is not of the quality to perform in the global high-rise competition or in the urban competitive environment envisioned by globalization.
- At the urban scale, the clustering formed by high-rises spatially segregate upper-middle income group users socially and economically, thereby creating a new system of spatial value(s). Nonetheless, it does not embody characteristics that would attract wealthy capital, immigrants or tourists.
- The envelope systems of high-rises and/or tall buildings on this axis are usually formed by glass and composite curtain walling applied onto the reinforced concrete bearing system.
- Energy-conserving façade systems that are advanced as doubly-enveloped and controllable by intelligent systems are not yet widespread. The precautions and characteristics towards energy-efficiency and sustainability at all stages from design to use are ironically stated only in advertising slogans (such “the first residence with windows that can be opened”).
Through this “new architectural identity” which is dependent on the power to be visible in the city or the symbolic rising higher in building designs, the meaning of architecture is also changing. The aim of architecture is more and more becoming focused on creating spaces that would pump up, that would enforce global living, which, in turn, serves the homogenization of architecture at the global scale.

It appears that, under these circumstances, architecture is left to the preferences of investors, to the solutions engineers can produce, and most importantly, to the individual experiences and frames of architects whose stars are polished.

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