

Between lines and land

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Abstract

This study engages with the evolving discourse of the post-theoretical paradigm and its implications for landscape architecture in Turkey. The research explores landscape architecture's shift to a post-theoretical stance, focusing on responsive solutions to societal and environmental challenges. The National Landscape Architecture Awards in Turkey, organized by the Turkish Chamber of Landscape Architects, play a pivotal role in this investigation. These awards, while reflecting the theoretical and practical evolution of landscape architecture, also act as barometers for the discipline's alignment with post-theoretical thought and its departure from traditional high theory. The research design uses a cyclical hermeneutic reading, where data collection, analysis, and interpretation continuously interact. Data was collected through a retrospective archive searches of Landscape Architecture Awards reports since 2009. Discourse analysis revealed the profession's post-theoretical status, reinterpreted hermeneutically and coded descriptively. Through this descriptive coding, the study identifies and interprets recurring themes, relationships, and concepts embedded within the award narratives, providing insights into the ever-blurring boundaries between theory and practice. The research underscores the significance of hermeneutics in deciphering the intricate dynamics shaping landscape architecture, especially in a post-theoretical age characterized by fluidity between theoretical constructs and practical implementations. Ultimately, by exploring the nuanced interplay between theory, practice, and context, this study offers a fresh perspective on landscape architecture's trajectory in Turkey, illuminating its adaptive and responsive nature in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords

Hermeneutics, Landscape architecture awards, Landscape architecture theory, Post theory, Theory and practice.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, design evolves with a rapidly changing world, challenging traditional top-down, theory-based models. The dynamic interaction between natural and artificial environments in landscape architecture transcends theoretical frameworks to address practical, context-specific realities. Practice-oriented theory develops from this synergy, offering new perspectives on environmental interactions. “Post-theory” responds to traditional theory’s limitations, advocating for pragmatic, adaptable, and context-sensitive approaches (Eagleton, 2004; Lyotard, 1979). Historically, landscape architecture emerged from Renaissance roots, viewing nature as a machine, which proved inadequate. Modern ecological awareness, sparked by Rachel Carson and Ian McHarg, transformed the discipline, making it responsive to social and ecological needs.

In Turkey, although the profession of landscape architecture has developed relatively recent, it has embraced the integration of Eastern and Western cultural influences in connection with the country’s unique landscapes. Anatolia’s dynamic human-environment relationship stems from its rich geography and cultural diversity. Education began in 1933 at Ankara Higher Agricultural Institute, with the Department of Landscape Architecture established in 1968. The profession was officially recognized in 1996 with the establishment of the TMMOB Chamber of Landscape Architects (TMMOBPMO), creating a socio-political framework for professional standards (TMMOBPMO, 2009).

The research examines the evolution of landscape architecture in Turkey, influenced by local dynamics, as reflected in the National Landscape Architecture Awards organized by the Turkish Chamber of Landscape Architects (TMMOBPMO, 2009). These awards enhance the prestige of the profession, highlight the interplay between design and real-world problems, and showcase the cyclical relationship between theory and practice. The study aims to understand the post-theoretical development of landscape architecture

in Turkey by focusing on the last 15 years. It explores how the profession has evolved in response to changing local and global dynamics, using a hermeneutic approach to reinterpret theoretical concepts within their historical, cultural and linguistic contexts.

The article is structured in two main chapters. In the first chapter, the evolution of the theoretical background of landscape architecture is examined in a post-theoretical manner. The second chapter focuses on the National Landscape Architecture Awards in Turkey and analyzes them through a hermeneutic reading to understand how these awards reflect post-theoretical thought. The impact of the awards on the selected projects and their compatibility with post-theoretical approaches are discussed. The analysis of the National Landscape Architecture Awards aims to fill the knowledge gap in the literature regarding these awards and the development of landscape architecture in Turkey. The research contributes to international literature by offering a new perspective on landscape architecture studies in Turkey.

2. The changing relation between theory and practice: Post-theory

Jean-François Lyotard (1979) argues in his book “The Postmodern Condition” that traditional grand narratives have lost their credibility in contemporary society, which is fragmented and pluralistic. Lyotard (1979) suggests embracing skepticism towards totalizing explanations and recognizing the plurality of smaller narratives and local contexts. His critique of metanarratives paved the way for questioning universal claims of theoretical frameworks.

Terry Eagleton’s “After Theory” (2004) presents a new perspective on the relationship between theory and practice, emphasizing the need for an approach that addresses different cultures and contemporary issues, diverging from the top-down approach of high theory. Eagleton associates the end of theory discussions with postmodern thought and the development of new approaches in the post-colonial era. Balcı and Uz (2022) note that post-theory topics in academia relate directly

to everyday life and the production of academic knowledge, distinct from political agendas. Eagleton (2004) articulates that the normative structure of language tends to homogenize the richness and diversity inherent in existence and phenomena. He warns that eliminating dogmatism is challenging, as cultures constantly transform in a changing world. Turnbull (2003) states that post-Derridean philosophy revitalized the aporetic self-examination of theory, appealing to contemporary intellectual sensibilities.

Stanley Fish (1985) describes the situation as generating both the “fear of theory” and the “hope of theory.” Eagleton (2004) cautions against assuming that culture can continually reshape itself while nature remains constant, highlighting the postmodernists’ critique of those who naturalize social or cultural phenomena.

The post-theory approach has redefined the relationship between theory and philosophy, impacting various disciplines. “Post-Theory: New Directions in Criticism,” edited by McQuillan et. Al. (1999), influenced literary criticism and theory by advocating interdisciplinary and innovative approaches. This work encouraged the exploration of diverse perspectives and methodologies, reshaping academic discussions and professional approaches in literary studies.

In “Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies” David Bordwell and Noel Carroll (1996) challenge prevailing film studies practices, seeking a unified theory to explain cinema since the 1970s. Post-theoretical studies have also influenced architectural and urban design theories. The postmodern architecture movement emerged as an opposition to modernist ideals, aiming to diversify architectural expression, reflect local cultural elements, and enrich spatial experience (Jencks, 2002).

“Practices were techniques, relationships, intelligences, and tendencies that shaped design; abstract entities that added value and ultimately distinguished one firm from another.” (Speaks, 2002).

Balcı and Uz (2022) extend this view by arguing that post-theory abolishes the vertical hierarchy of theory over practice. According to Balcı and Uz (2022) architecture reflects an agency

within ever-changing organizational patterns, rather than a centrally directed shaping consciousness.

The transition from theory to post-theory in architecture represents signifies a pivotal shift from perceiving architecture as an autonomous discipline to adopting a more pragmatic and context-riven approach. Autonomy in architecture is characterized by a focus on the discipline’s internal logic and principles, but with neo-pragmatism, challenges this notion by advocating for architecture that responds to external factors such as social needs, environmental concerns, and cultural contexts (Şahin & Kömez Dağlıoğlu, 2023). Neo-pragmatism in architecture emphasizes practical, real-world solutions and the impact of architectural design on its users and the broader community. It promotes a more inclusive and flexible approach, considering diverse perspectives and the interconnectedness of various factors influencing architectural practice. (Şahin & Kömez Dağlıoğlu, 2023).

In the book “Theory After Theory,” published by Jane Elliot and Derek Attridge (2011), it is argued that theory is far from dead but has undergone significant changes to engage with the most pressing cultural and political issues of our time. The book covers articles on biopolitics, bioethics, neoliberalism, and aesthetics, while still maintaining a relationship beyond post-structuralism. In an environment where changes in practical life are happening so rapidly, theory has transformed into an interpretive tool that delves into the reasons for the evolution of practices, their forms, and the relationships between them (Elliot & Attridge, 2011). Although the existence of a theory separate from practice is no longer valid, it is a fact that practice requires the support of theory to understand, interpret, and predict its own processes.

3. Landscape architecture theory in theory(less)ness / or / landscape architecture theory as an after-theory?

In the 17th century, Western landscape architecture emerged with a reductionist view of nature, influenced by Descartes, treating it as a machine

for human use, which later proved inadequate for environmental issues (Erbaş Gürler, 2012). In response to the Industrial Revolution's unhealthy cities, England developed green recreational areas, giving rise to the "Landscape Garden," countering French formal gardens. In the U.S., Frederick Law Olmsted's Parks Movement integrated rural and urban areas. These developments transitioned from private garden designs to public spaces, solidifying landscape architecture as a profession by the late 19th century (Erbaş Gürler, 2012).

Garrett Eckbo's (1950) "Landscape for Living" shifted from pre-war private gardens to social, human-centered designs (Erbaş Gürler, 2012). By the mid-20th century, Rachel Carson's (1962) "Silent Spring" and Apollo 8's 1968 Earth images highlighted ecological fragility, fostering ecological consciousness. Ian McHarg's (1969) "Design with Nature" promoted ecological design principles in professional practice (Spirn, 1998).

By the late 1980s, the focus in landscape architecture had shifted to environmental issues, with a 1990s emphasis on traditional, local characteristics, and ecological balance. Amos Rapaport's (1990) "History and Precedent in Environmental Design" linked historical insights to new urban design theories (Rapaport, 1990; via Erbaş Gürler, 2012). The field became fragmented with ideological dilemmas and multiple identities (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Post-theory in landscape architecture suggests theory should emerge from practice. Early texts like Vitruvius's "De Architectura" emphasized harmony between nature and built environments, also The Renaissance works, such as Alberti's "De Re Aedificatoria," focused on garden aesthetics (Jellicoe & Jellicoe, 1975). Olmsted's 19th-century writings addressed industrial urban challenges, advocating for public parks (Jellicoe & Jellicoe, 1975). McHarg's "Design with Nature" responded to environmental concerns, initiating ecological planning (McHarg, 1969). Contemporary works, like "The Landscape Urbanism Reader," emphasize sustainable design amidst climate change (Waldheim, 2006). The theories after

modern era supports landscape architecture's adaptation to societal needs, technological developments, and ecological awareness.

Prominent theorists like Meyer (1991) and Corner (1991) emphasize the importance of socio-political contexts in landscape architecture theory. Corner (1999) investigates the theoretical foundations and debates within the field, highlighting cultural, ecological, and social shifts. Meyer (1991) also influenced landscape theory by focusing on socio-cultural contexts and advocating for critical approaches considering power, identity, and representation.

In the postmodern era, align with the development of the profession, landscape architecture has often prioritized practice over theory. Riley (1990) describes this as "theorylessness," suggesting many purported theories are pseudo-theories. He advocates a post-theoretical approach, distinguishing frameworks from aphorisms and confining "theory" to knowledge explaining specific real-world events.

Aligned with post-theoretical thought, landscape theory challenges naturalized thought patterns, offers alternatives, and reshapes the relationship between culture and landscape. Meyer (1991) advocates viewing landscapes as dynamic elements with autonomous design language. Corner (1991) similarly argues for transforming landscapes into active, strategic cultural elements. These studies critique existing knowledge and encourage new forms of understanding and research methods. Kaplan (2017) stresses the need for comprehensive conceptualization encompassing all dimensions of landscape theory and practice for full comprehension and interpretation.

Landscape architects and theorists see the profession as practice-oriented and not fully equipped with high theory, though often seen as having "theory hope" like Speaks' (2002) approach. However, a theory developing in close conjunction with real life is undeniable. Despite its recent emergence, the profession has paved the way for a naturally developing post-theory form. Eagleton (2004) highlights the variability of nature and culture, arguing changing cultural values can be more

challenging than altering physical landscapes. This supports the post-theoretical approach, emphasizing adaptable and context-sensitive theoretical frameworks in landscape architecture.

Landscape is seen as a sum of events and phenomena from the interaction between nature and humans. This definition explains how landscape exists symbiotically with social and physical communities, nature, and human structures. It cannot be separated from individual/social perception and the temporal dynamics of cultures, placing the individual at the center (Kaplan, 2009; Kaplan, 2017; Swaffield, 2006; Weller, 2001).

The concept of landscape maintains a vital essence while balancing elements over time. Each landscape has a unique character and narrative shaped by people and nature. Kaplan (2017) categorizes landscape into three axes: material, lens, and approach. Landscape is constantly evolving, with changing colors and textures reflecting the seasons. Human needs and actions significantly influence landscape direction, sustaining continuous interest and commitment. The landscape's dynamism, changing nature, and richness offer new opportunities for discovery. People strive to understand and coexist with the landscape, enhancing its value as a living work of art. Ultimately, the landscape emerges as a narrative born from the interaction between nature and humanity, balancing stability and dynamism, with human design and actions contributing to its development.

In landscape architecture, the appropriate level of generalization for theory is also an integral part of some debates. Theory can be expressed at various scales. According to Meyer (1991),

“Landscape theory is not general but specific... Landscape architectural design and theory are known through observation or experience, known in an immediate and sensory way - everyone knows.”

Therefore, landscape architecture theory is situational, explicitly historical, conditional, pragmatic, and ad hoc. It is not concerned with idealistic universals but rather finds meaning in the field through form and structure (Meyer, 1991; Swaffield, 2006). Landscape architecture theory, with

its multifaceted, evolving, and practice-oriented nature, has embarked on a transformative journey by embracing a post-theoretical format. Critical perspectives have significantly shaped the development of post-theoretical thinking in this field. The post-theoretical approach in landscape architecture involves sensitivity to context, interdisciplinary collaboration, and connections with local communities and ecosystems. However, the focus is on understanding and shaping the complex network of relationships that constitute a landscape, rather than designing individual objects.

4. Hermeneutics in landscape architecture

4.1. Hermeneutics as an interpreter between theory and practice

For Gadamer, praxis is the formulation of modes of relating to life in the broadest sense (Gadamer, 2006 as cited in Bernstein, 1982). Praxis exists between being in life and action. In interpreting a text, there is a theoretical attitude towards the practice of interpretation, but at the same time, within it, there is a world-directedness that opens up in the communicative nature of the interpreted experience (Gadamer, 2006). In this context, Gadamer attempts to define his philosophical hermeneutics as an understanding related to practice, aiming to transcend the modern opposition between theory and praxis. He seeks to reintegrate praxis into theory within a holistic understanding of truth (Gadamer, 2006).

The post-theoretical approach, while questioning the traditional distinction between theory and practice, does not distinguish one from another. However, this approach acknowledges that theory and practice are intertwined (Eagleton, 2004). If the traditional division between theory and practice is eliminated from a post-theoretical perspective, the emphasis shifts towards examining the context in which discourse and action occur in detail. It becomes necessary to understand what concepts (or clusters of meaning) constitute the sources of actions. The distinction between theory and practice cannot be rigidly delineated. However,

recognizing that these two concepts have distinct aspects allows us to acknowledge their uniqueness and value within their respective domains. During this period, hermeneutics focuses on in-depth understanding in the analysis of the relationship between theory and practice. It helps us understand how theoretical approaches engage in dialogue with practice and how this dialogue generates interaction.

By emphasizing the continuous nature of understanding and interpretation, a process-oriented approach helps us grasp the dynamic nature of the relationship between theory and practice. Hermeneutics provides valuable insights into the interpretation of events and phenomena by highlighting the significance of understanding within the context of human experience. Hermeneutics posits that meaning is not an inherent property of the objective world but emerges within the realm of human interpretation and understanding (Drenthen, 2016).

Hermeneutics supports techniques such as text analysis, historical criticism, and phenomenological thinking to understand the deep meanings of texts. Different from conventional reading methodologies, instead of aiming to find a single, objective truth, hermeneutics accepts the diversity of interpretations and argues that meaning is formed by the combination of horizons between the text and the interpreter. This approach questions existing debates and encourages ongoing dialogues to enrich meaning. Hermeneutics used practically in literary and philosophical studies, as well as in fields such as theology and social sciences, where contextual understanding is important for understanding complex texts and cultural values. Similarly, the processes developed within the profession of landscape architecture can be viewed as an open text open to interpretation [1]. Landscape architects can bring their own horizons to the landscape, engaging with the multifaceted meanings existing within it as interpreters. According to Eaton (2006) hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation, and neo-pragmatism, a philosophical approach emphasizing practical consequences and real-world

applications, intersect in landscape architecture through the process of understanding and designing landscapes. Eaton (2006) mentions that “*Hermeneutics and neo-pragmatism offer an approach to guide ‘theory talk’ in landscape architecture that can move past commentary on perceived problems and work toward informing what landscape architects do and can do*”. Especially in today’s post-theoretical environment, where the parameters influencing decisions are increasingly diverse and taking on a holistic perspective, we can say that semantic structures transform themselves into visible patterns. In this era where the boundaries between practice and theory are becoming increasingly blurred, the tracking of processes also becomes more complex. In this context, hermeneutics is seen as an important form of interpretation for understanding which factors influence outcomes and how processes unfold.

4.2. Hermeneutic reading as a methodology

This research aims to explore the evolution of landscape architecture practices in a post-theoretical context. The main focus is to understand the transformation of the National Landscape Architecture Awards in Turkey, a pivotal entity in the profession’s development, despite its recent history. Additionally, it considers the impact of the “International Landscape Architecture Awards” on the profession, which are particularly in enhancing the profession’s prestige and public perception. The awards have been given annually during National Landscape Architecture Week since 2009, and they have recognized 101 projects in various categories, spanning from “Implemented Projects” to the “Communication Category” and from the “Young Landscape Architect Award” to “Analysis and Planning”. Award-winning projects can be interpreted not only as tools for recognition but also as texts that provide information about the content and orientations of the profession (TMMOBPMO, 2022a). Through a hermeneutic interpretation of the awarded projects, the study aims to explore how these factors have shaped the post-theoretical condition

of landscape architecture at a national level. In this context, theoretical approaches and practical applications that evident in the awarded projects have been analyzed holistically through a hermeneutic lens.

The first step of the content analysis involved reading design and jury reports of award-winning projects, analyzed using Atlas.ti Version 23.4.0 qualitative data management software (Atlas.ti, 2023). The analysis categorized theoretical approaches into sub-categories to understand the main concepts in the discourse. Design and planning decisions were then examined to see how they addressed these approaches practically. For each of the 69 projects, theoretical concepts and relationships were listed alongside practical applications that integrate these goals into the design process.

During the hermeneutic reading process, theoretical approaches and practical solutions were examined, identifying recurring themes, concepts, and relationships within project texts. The projects were examined considering the awards' significance within the landscape architecture discipline and the social, cultural, and political context of the award periods (Figure 1). As a conclusion, the study aims to examine the post-theoretical evolutionary process of landscape architecture in Turkey, evaluating the dynamics of the National Landscape Architecture Awards and their interaction between theory and practice.

5. Symbols of merit or narratives of culture? Understanding the hermeneutics of National Landscape Architecture Awards in Turkey

The Turkish Chamber of Landscape Architects (TMMOB PMO) organizes these awards with the aim of promoting and recognizing landscape architecture activities nationwide by supporting the development of the profession (TMMOBPMO, 2022a). Each year, TMMOB PMO publishes a set of criteria for the awards as a document before accepting submissions. It is mandatory for all participants to be members of the organization (TMMOBPMO, 2022a).

Out of the total 101 awards, 32 awards were excluded from the analysis process due to their non-project nature categorized as Honor Awards, Communication Awards, and Contribution to the Profession Awards. Of the remaining 69 projects, it was not possible to access the project content for 15 of them. However, this discrepancy was overlooked as content was provided for the majority of the projects that received awards each year, and the projects exhibited sufficient diversity among themselves.

5.1. A Reflection on the evolution of landscape architecture: Analyzing the themes of the National Landscape Architecture Awards

The National Landscape Architecture Awards provide a unique platform in

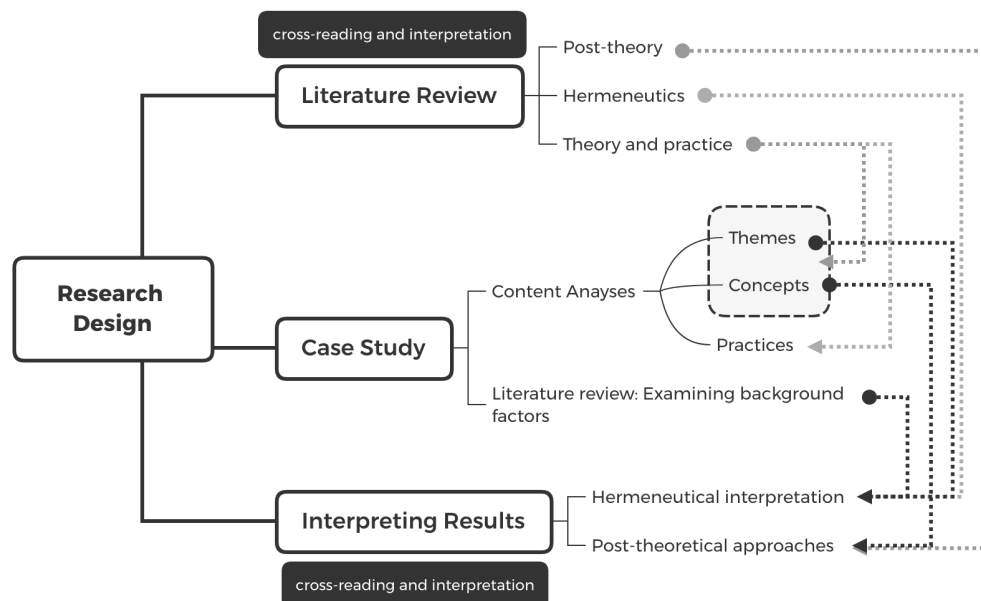


Figure 1. Research design.

Turkey to celebrate the evolution of landscape architecture. The themes set by the committees for each year reflect how landscape architecture in Turkey has evolved in response to the challenges and opportunities faced by society and the environment. In this context, to understand the dynamics of the profession's early-historic development, the specifications of the awards were examined, and the themes emphasized by these specifications for project submissions were evaluated in terms of their scope.

The categories and scope of these awards have evolved, especially at specific turning points. Between 2009 and 2015, the focus was primarily on the categories of Project and Implemented Project, while from 2015 to 2017, categories such as Implemented Project, Unimplemented Project, Analysis and Planning, Urban Icon, Communication, and Young Landscape Architect gained prominence (TMMOBPMO, 2014b; TMMOBPMO, 2015a; TMMOBPMO, 2016b; TMMOBPMO, 2017a). Between 2018 and 2022, new categories like General Category Project, Settlement Area Project, Urban Design, Analysis and Planning were introduced, increasing the total number of categories to 13, allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation of the awards (TMMOBPMO, 2018; TMMOBPMO, 2019b; TMMOBPMO, 2021; TMMOBPMO, 2022). Additionally, since its inception, the awards have recognized individuals who have made significant contributions and services to Landscape Architecture and TMMOB PMO with an Honorary Award (Table 1; TMMOBPMO, 2022a).

Content analysis was conducted on the project texts. During the content analysis, the discourses used in the descriptions of the award-winning projects were examined first. To analyze in detail the topics and concepts addressed by these discourses, the targeted objectives of the projects were identified. Then, in order to express the relationship between objectives with concrete indicators, relevant sections of the project texts were subjected to discourse analysis. Using the Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software, objectives and aims of the projects were

Table 1. *Distribution of award categories through years.*

Year	Award Categories
2009-2015	Project Award
	Implemented Project Award
	Honor Award
2016-2017	Implemented Project Award
	Non-Implemented Project Award
	Analysis and Planning Award
	Landmark Award
	Communication Award
	Contribution to The Profession Award
	Young Landscape Architect Award
	Honor Award
2018-2022	General Category Project Award
	Residential Project Award
	Urban Design Award
	Analysis and Planning Award
	Sustainable Practices and Projects in Public Landscape Design Award
	Young Landscape Architect Award
	Communication Award
	Contribution to the Profession Award
	Honor Award

repeatedly scanned and those with meaningful relationships were noted. These meaningful relationships were compiled under the main heading of "concepts." The process has been repeated until the identification of a total of 19 main concepts, as depicted in Figure 2. The concepts of the award-winning projects have been diversified since the early period. In the year 2021, when the number of awards reached its maximum, the themes similarly increased in diversity.

Throughout this process, the award categories have reflected developments and emphases within the field of landscape architecture. Upon examining Figure 3, it is discernible that there is engagement with almost every concept across all categories over time. This suggests that the profession has cultivated a consistent discourse. Notably, landscape architects, especially those who focused on place-context, display a comprehensive perspective which emphasizes "historical cultural context", "ecological awareness", and "user-centered design" approaches in every award category. The greater number of issues addressed in the applied project category indicates that the award criteria combine both conceptual and practical considerations.

Similarly, due to its inherent scale, the urban design category prominently features concepts such as “public space and interest”, “cultural and historical context”, and “environment and urban”. The least addressed concepts have been “multidisciplinary approach” and “private areas and privacy”.

Figure 4 presents the distribution of concepts addressed by projects according to award themes. When examining the diagram, it can be seen that in 2016, the theme of protected areas had the most conceptual diversity, primar-

ily in the “cultural and historical context.” Subsequently, in the 2019 theme of Time, Space, and Memory, the concept of “spatial diversity” is most prominently addressed.

The National Landscape Architecture Awards, presented from 2009 to the present, provide a detailed reflection of the evolution of landscape architecture, its predominant trends, and key concepts that shape the sector. These awards vividly showcase the changes and developments in the field, highlighting prominent trends, trans-

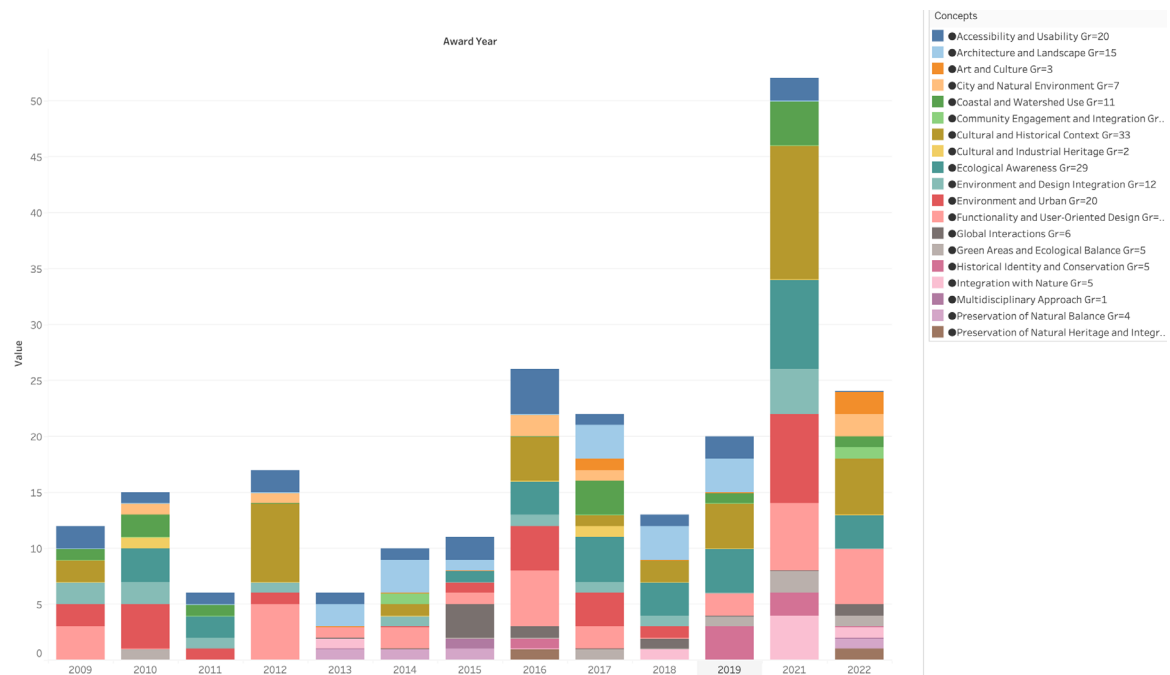


Figure 2. Distribution of concepts through years.

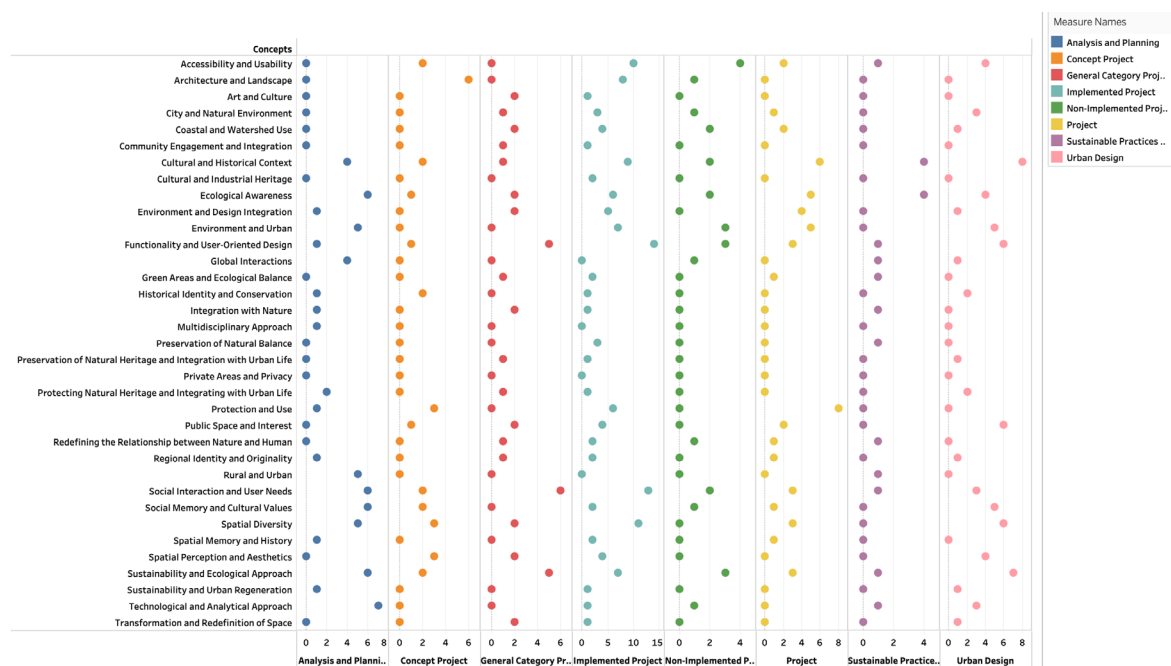


Figure 3. Distribution of concepts/approaches by award categories.

formations, and turning points within landscape architecture during this period.

Over the course of the past decade and beyond, landscape architecture has undergone transformative shifts. Each period has been marked by its own set of challenges, its own cultural, socio-ecological, and regulatory imperatives. This evolution has been eloquently reflected in the National Landscape Architecture Awards and the associated themes that are in essence, a mirror to the changing urban scape.

The themes and sub-concepts of the National Landscape Architecture Awards in different periods offer a significant perspective reflecting the evolving nature of the discipline. Reading these sub-concepts within their hermeneutical contexts (such as

socio-cultural, historical, ecological, political) will reveal us the integrated evaluation of the theory and practice in awarded projects.

5.2. Socio-ecological concerns in the rise of the urban (2009-2010)

The year 2009, the period in which these awards were launched, marks a dynamic time for the professional discipline on a national scale. The acceptance of the Association of Landscape Architects to membership at the European Federation of Landscape Architects (EFLA) General Assembly held in Brussels on 20-22 November 2009 initiated international participation. In the same year, with the enactment of the “Opening Areas Near Military Areas and Military Security Zones for Development” law, forest

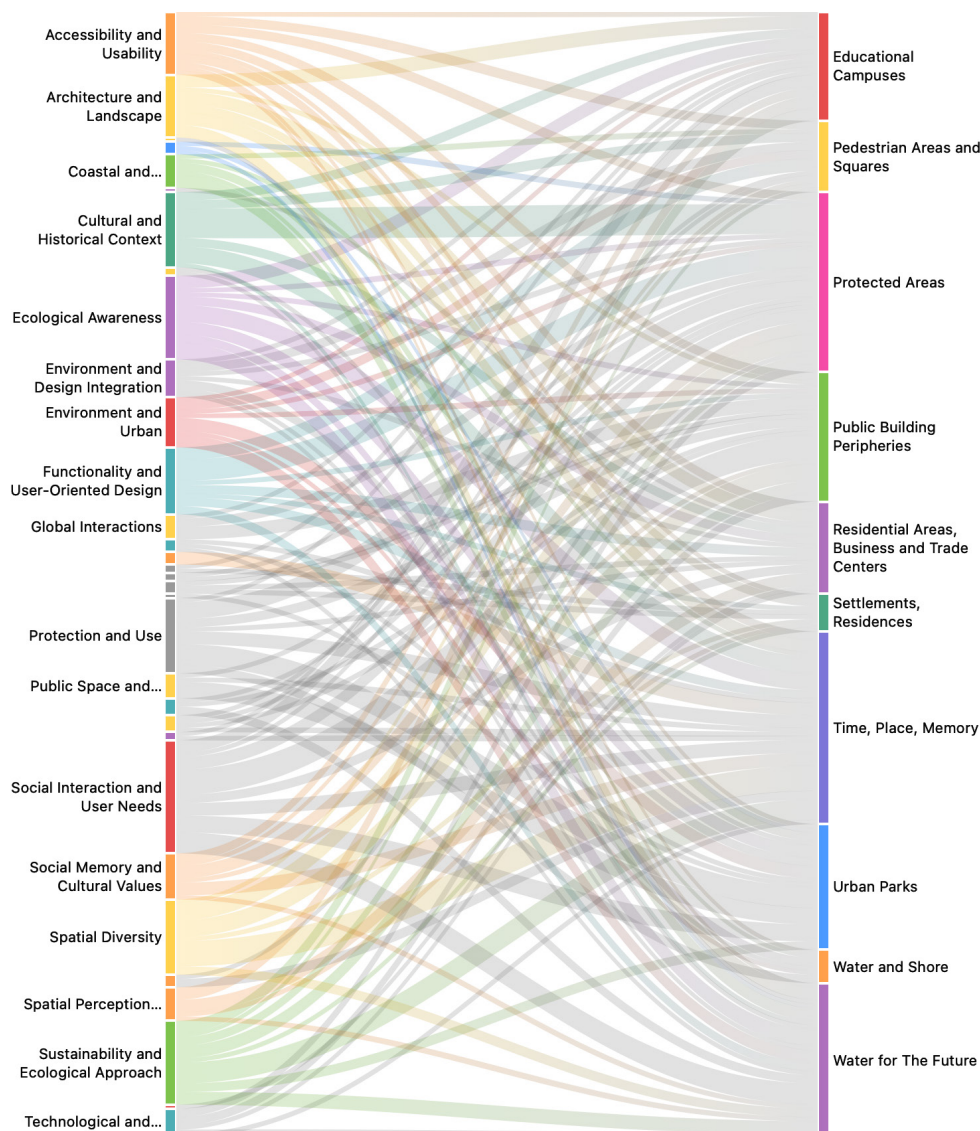


Figure 4. Distribution of concepts by award themes.

areas were opened to construction, which increased the demand for hard surfaces in urban areas. Additionally, “The Istanbul Zoning Regulation Plan” has been updated (Nuhoglu et al., 2016). In this context, the role of landscape architecture in urban areas gained even greater importance. As a result of the legal efforts by the association, the Ministry of Public Works and Settlements explicitly stated in a defense document sent to the association on July 10, 2009, that landscape projects became mandatory in construction areas, and their boundaries needed to be delineated by the Landscape Architects Association (TMMOBPMO, August 2009). Thus, landscape architects’ responsibilities extended into urban areas as well.

The first edition of the National Landscape Architecture Awards in 2009 introduced “Pedestrian Areas and Squares” as its central theme, reflecting evolving landscape dynamics (TMMOBPMO, 2014a). The subsequent 2010 edition, themed “Urban Parks,” prioritized the expansion of green spaces and the preservation of natural ecosystems within urban areas in response to urbanization’s adverse effects (TMMOBPMO, 2014b). This period also emphasized sub-concepts such as the integration of landscape with its environmental and cultural context and the promotion of local identity. Notable projects included the restoration of historical buildings in the Aksaray City Square [2], highlighting cultural preservation, and the Newport



Figure 5. Newport Square International Project Sketch From Sunay Erdem. 1st National Landscape Architecture Awards “Project” category winner. Project Year: 2006, Project Team: Sunay Erdem Architects (TMMOBPMO, 2014a).

Square International Project, which aimed to connect a city segment with its surroundings while adapting to the local context (Figure 5; TMMOBPMO, 2014a).

The Bilecik Hamsu Valley City Park Project serves as a compelling illustration of this socio-ecological relationship. Situated in the historically significant Hamsu Valley, the project acknowledges the valley's heritage dating back to the Eastern Roman period, continuing through the Early Ottoman period and the War of Independence. Recognized with the Project Award in 2010, it stands out for its design that respects the region's historical fabric, integrates natural landscape values, enhances the urban green space network, and opens the valley for public use (TMMOBPMO, 2010).

The National Landscape Architecture Awards, launched in 2009, emphasized its role in urbanism dynamics with the themes of "Pedestrian Areas and Squares" and "Urban Parks". This period reflects Lyotard's concept of "distrust of metanarratives" and refers to a period in which grand narratives were replaced by small and local narratives. These projects emphasize the importance of preserving local identity and natural ecosystems. These projects take place within a framework where theory and practice are intertwined, emphasizing the importance of preserving local contexts and cultural values.

5.3. Challenging in local and global scales (2011-2015)

Between 2011 and 2015, urban and natural environments faced significant challenges. Projects like the Istanbul Canal and the 3rd Bosphorus Bridge impacted terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, while global climate change effects, such as rising sea levels and increased flooding, became evident (Akbulut & Candan, 2014; Envirotech, 2019). The 2011 "Water and Coastal" theme at the 3rd National Landscape Architecture Awards emphasized urban-coastal relationships and sustainable waterfront preservation (TMMOBPMO, 2014).

In 2012, planning authority over Turkey's protected areas shifted to

the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, sparking debates over the Ankara Atatürk Forest Farm's designation as a renewal area (TMMOBPMO, 2012a; Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, 2013). The 4th Award period's "Protected Areas" theme focused on historical and cultural preservation, with projects like Edirne Municipality's Selimiye Mosque integrating urban spaces with historical environments (TMMOBPMO, 2012b; TMMOBPMO, 2014).

Post-1999 Marmara Earthquake legislation led to urban transformation projects in high-risk areas, influencing urban development practices. The 2013-2015 awards promoted the synergy of architecture and landscape architecture, reflecting the discipline's multidisciplinary growth (Ministry of Urban and Environment, 2012; TMMOBPMO, 2013, 2014a, 2015a). The 2013 Gezi Park protests highlighted urban planning issues, social justice, and public space protection, recognized in the 2015 awards (Nuhoğlu et al., 2016; TMMOBPMO, 2015a).

In 2013, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies included landscape architects in disability access committees, with the 7th National Landscape Architecture Awards showcasing inclusive projects like the "Autistic Children's Education Center" (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2013; TMMOBPMO, 2015a).

This period aligns with Lyotard's (1979) post-theoretical process, where local contexts gain importance over grand narratives, and social movements, as Eagleton theorizes, shape cultural and political debates.

5.4. Touches of eco-centrism in landscape (2016-2018)

The year 2016 witnessed a notable expansion of the holistic and multidisciplinary nature of the landscape architecture profession, with a thematic focus on "Urban Design" (TMMOBPMO, 2016b). This period coincided with the rapid expansion of landscape architects' design domains and an increased awareness of natural crises in the media. Key concepts that gained prominence during this period included "ecosystem restoration,"

“sustainable waste management,” “permeable landscapes,” and “biodiversity” (TMMOBPMO, 2016a).

Mitchell’s re-evaluation of the effects of technology on spatial arrangements shows how projects in this period achieved environmental sustainability using digital design tools. Fainstein’s (2009) planning processes based on the participation of local communities and Jencks’ aims of postmodern architecture to reflect local cultural elements support the theoretical approaches in these projects. Two exemplary projects from this year exemplify these principles. The Tuzla Kamil Abdüş Lagoon project prioritized sustainability, emphasizing the restoration of ecological values and water management, particularly highlighting the significance of wetlands (Figure 6; TMMOBPMO, 2016a). Meanwhile, the Eskişehir Waste Stations project[4] emphasized sustainable waste management, utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for data analysis and site selection, underlining the importance of data-driven design approaches and the integration of “analytical approach”

and “technology” (TMMOBPMO, 2016a).

In 2017, the theme shifted to “Water for the Future,” signifying a significant pivot within the landscape architecture field, with a renewed focus on water surfaces and wetlands as fundamental components of spatial design (TMMOBPMO, 2017a). The Chamber of Landscape Architects had long been engaged in efforts to conserve wetlands (TMMOBPMO, 2015b; TMMOBPMO, 2016c). Environmental concerns, such as the potential harm from the third airport project over Terkos Lake and the submergence of Hasankeyf, as well as impending water crises, played a pivotal role in shaping the agenda in the latter part of the 2010s (TMMOBPMO, February 2016c). Awarded projects during this year continued to underscore socio-ecological considerations, highlighting themes like “the relationship between nature and humans,” “industrial heritage,” and “natural heritage” within cultural and historical contexts. This reflects the landscape architecture field’s tendency to address ecological concerns with-

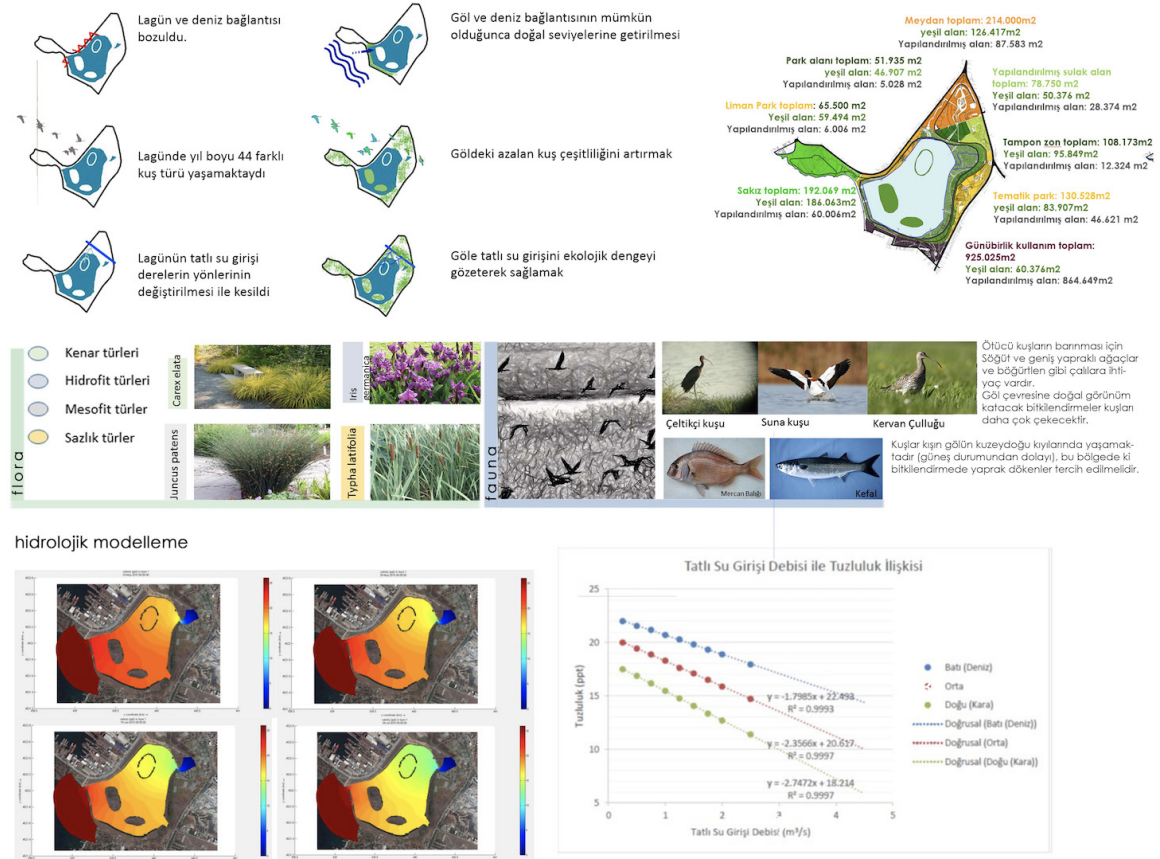


Figure 6. Tuzla Kamil Abdüş Lagoon Project. 7th National Landscape Architecture Awards “Analyses and Planning” category winner. Project Year: 2019, Project Team: Hayriye Eşbah Tunçay, Author(s), Nazife Tuğçe Onuk.

in the broader framework of societal dynamics and historical backgrounds (TMMOBPMO, June 2017).

The year 2018 introduced a fresh perspective with the theme “Educational Campuses,” expanding the socio-ecological context of landscape into campus environments (Arkitera, 2018). This emphasized that educational spaces serve not only as learning environments but are also essential for fostering social interactions and ecological sustainability. For example, the ITU Green Campus Project integrated ecological approaches such as rainwater management and the promotion of biodiversity through the use of permeable concrete (Figure 7). Similarly, the Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Student Life Center Landscape Project embraced a dynamic design language, leveraging topography and landscape elements to encourage social interaction (TMMOBPMO, 2018).

5.5. Context-oriented solutions in rural and urban (2019-today)

In 2019, the National Landscape Architecture Awards underwent

a thematic shift, centering on the concept of “Time, Place, Memory” (TMMOB, 2019b). These projects, rooted in socio-cultural memories of specific locales and communities, introduced innovative landscape design concepts, including “landscape and women,” “urban agriculture and permaculture,” and “the ecological design guide” (TMMOBPMO, 2019a). For example, the Silivri Büyükkılıçlı Village Project[5] featured the Women Farmers Village, showcasing landscape’s potential for promoting social and economic activities, particularly among women (TMMOBPMO, 2019a).

However, in 2020, the chamber experienced a change in leadership, leading to the discontinuation of the practice of setting annual award themes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, resulting in no awards being presented that year (TMMOBPMO, 2020).

The projects honored at the 12th and 13th National Landscape Architecture Awards in 2021 and 2022 predominantly offered holistic socio-ecological solutions, addressing multiple concepts, in-

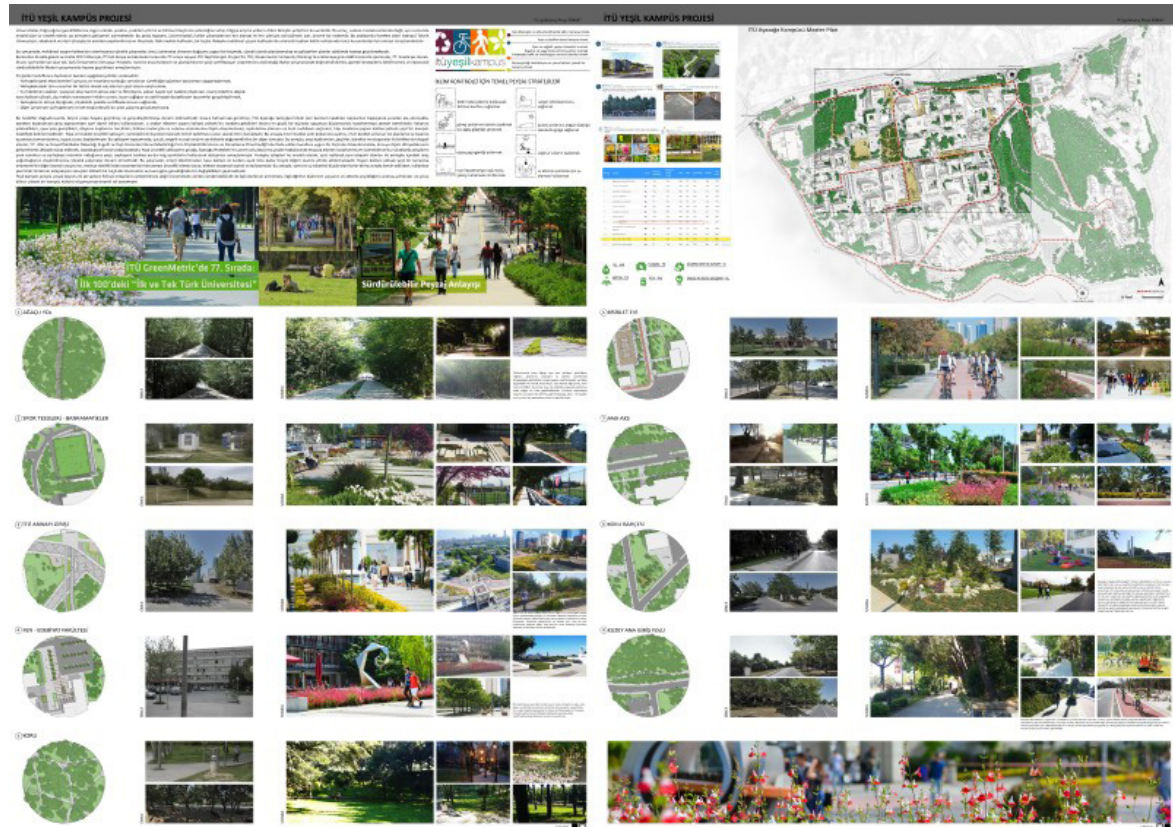


Figure 7. ITU Green Campus Project. 7th National Landscape Architecture Awards “Analyses and Planning” category winner. Project Year: 2015, Project Team: Hayriye EŞBAH TUNÇAY, Yasin Çağatay SEÇKİN, Gülname TURAN, Mehmet KARACA, Tayfun KINDAP, Telem GÖK SADIKOĞLU, Mustafa Sait YAZGAN, Sis Karaman ALKAN.

integration and reciprocity approach by highlighting human-directed natural processes through the union of natural water bodies (TMMOBPMO, 2022b). Harvey's (1996) emphasis on social justice and environmental sustainability is evident in projects from this period.

6. Conclusion

The post-theory approach redefines the relationship between theory and practice, significantly influencing various disciplines. In literary criticism and theory, it has fostered interdisciplinary and innovative approaches, challenging traditional structures. Similarly, cinema studies, architecture, and urban design theories have been reshaped under post-theory's influence. In landscape architecture, theory and practice are deeply intertwined with written texts reflecting the era's needs and values. This evolution shows landscape architecture's adaptation to societal needs, technological advancements, and ecological imperatives, illustrating the dynamic interaction between theory and practice.

Post-theory questions the distinction between traditional theory and practice, while recognizing the intertwined nature of these two concepts. In this context, the hermeneutics emphasizes meaning-making and subjective participation in the relationship between theory and practice. According to Eagleton (2004), the art of interpretation that forms the foundation of hermeneutics emerged from a colonial encounter. While hermeneutics may bring theory closer to its essence through "dizzying abstractions," Eagleton (2004) suggests that in the post-theory era, it should be reconsidered not as a method of textual analysis but as a process of reading. In this context, hermeneutics, as a mode of interpretation and understanding, can constitute one of the fundamental building blocks of context-sensitive relationships between theory and practice in the post-theory era.

The evolution of the National Landscape Architecture Awards across various categories reflects the changing priorities and approaches within landscape architecture over time. As

a result of the hermeneutical reading, these awards underscore that landscape architecture bears social, ecological, and cultural responsibilities alongside aesthetic ones. They showcase the discipline's capacity to provide innovative solutions to urban and environmental challenges, exemplifying a post-theoretical state characterized by holistic perspectives, responsiveness to contemporary issues, and adaptability to changing dynamics.

The evolution of the National Landscape Architecture Awards is emblematic of the post-theory approach, reflecting an integrative and responsive paradigm shift in the discipline. Drawing from the previously detailed progression, we can discern the following influences of post-theory branches on the Awards (Figure 9).

6.1. Global interactions

The post-theoretical approach in landscape architecture goes beyond traditional theories, embracing a broader, more comprehensive understanding that values global knowledge exchange and multicultural experiences. This leads to richer, more diverse design solutions. Lyotard's (1979) concept of "disbelief in metanarratives" underscores the importance of smaller, local narratives over grand, universal ones, highlighting the value of universal knowledge exchange and multicultural experiences. Landscape architecture synthesizes global information sharing and diverse cultural practices within this framework.

Ian McHarg's (1969) ecological planning approach, which emphasizes harmony with nature, has been globally adopted, allowing local knowledge to be reinterpreted in a global context. The Turkish Chamber of Landscape Architects' admission to the European Federation of Landscape Architects facilitated international information exchange and standard harmonization, promoting the development of Turkish landscape architecture in line with international standards.

As the profession evolved, the Awards' themes expanded from local to global concerns, particularly from 2011-2015, addressing issues like cli-

mate change and the urban-rural nexus. The post-theory acknowledges the permeability of local and global interactions, advocating for transcending regional boundaries.

6.2. Socio-cultural context

The post-theoretical situation in landscape architecture proves its integration with social and cultural dynamics, not just physical space creation. In “After Theory,” Eagleton (2004) underlines the importance of local narratives and cultural transformation. Landscape architecture, therefore, responds to societal needs and tries to preserve the cultural values. Eckbo’s (1950) suggested design approaches promotes social justice and inclusion, aligning with Lyotard’s critique of metanarratives. The Awards’ themes from 2019 to today underscore user-centered designs and the interplay of time, place, and memory, highlighting solutions resonating with the socio-cultural fabric and immediate environment.

6.3. Ecological context

In “After Theory,” Eagleton (2004) highlights the need to redefine the relationship between culture and nature continuously. In ecological

context, the profession emphasizes sustainability and environmental protection. Rachel Carson’s (1962) and Ian McHarg’s (1969) works increased ecological awareness, with McHarg (1969) advocating for design approaches compatible with natural systems. Lyotard’s (1979) critique of metanarratives supports the development of flexible, diverse perspectives can be adaptable to various ecological contexts in landscape architecture. This relation can be used to replacing homogenizing environmental policies with solutions tailored to local ecosystems. The awards frequently emphasize ecology, focusing on themes like urban green spaces, ecosystem conservation, sustainable waste management, biodiversity, and the critical role of water, particularly from 2016-2018.

6.4. Holistic approach

Post-theory underlines the importance of traditional frameworks, embracing flexible, practice-based thinking from multiple perspectives. Landscape architecture, developed its background in a close relationship with its surrounding environment by ecology, sustainability, and local contexts, creates a ecological, social, and cultural systems. Theorists like

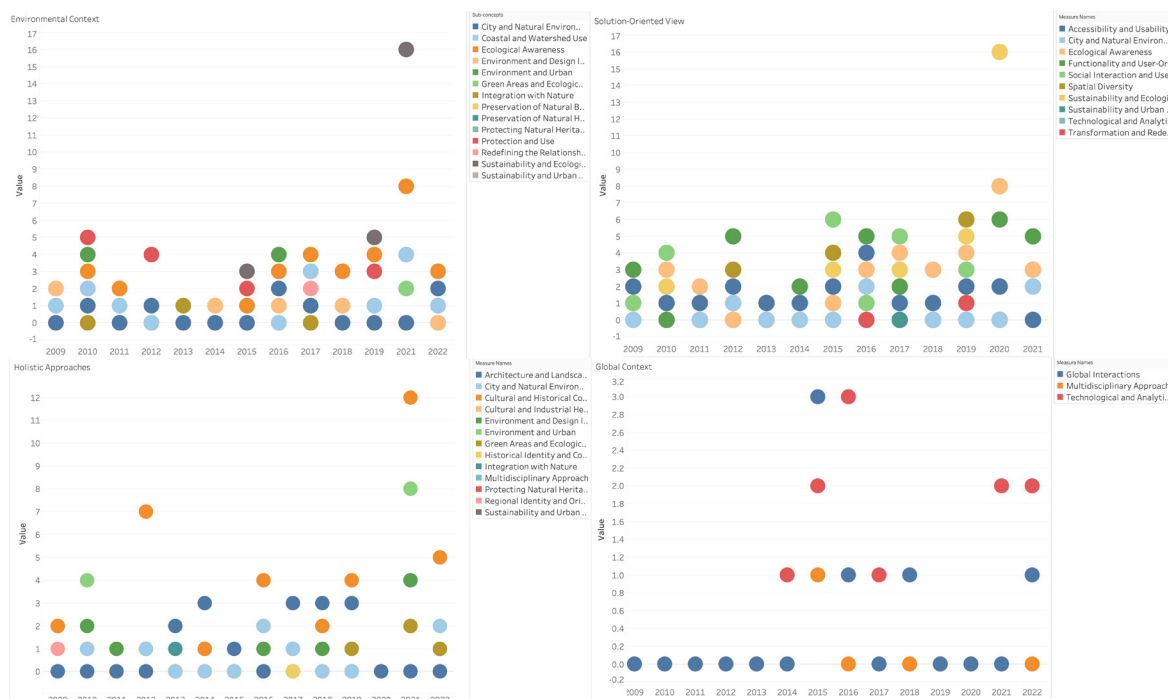


Figure 9. Concepts related with the post-theoretical situations.

Elizabeth Meyer (1991) and James Corner (1991) highlight the dynamic relationship between theory and practice by underlining the cultural, social, and ecological changes and focusing not only the outcomes but also processes.

In nationwide, recent awards spotlight versatile, multi-scale projects shaped by geographical, historical, and social contexts, reflecting the post-theoretical emphasis on local experiences and knowledge. The National Landscape Architecture Awards are compliant with this situation by extending beyond aesthetics to encompass social, ecological, and cultural dimensions. The awards recognize the projects and reflect the dynamic nature of landscape architecture, rooted in specific contexts and shaping the field's evolution. This perspective aligns with post-theory, emphasizing the mutual nourishment and transformation of theory and practice.

Over the past fifteen years, landscape architecture has witnessed remarkable shifts. These Awards chronicle these evolutions, each period characterized by distinct socio-cultural, ecological, and regulatory dynamics. This evolving situation underscores the shifting paradigms within landscape architecture. It's evident that award categories adeptly reflect the intricacies of landscape architecture over time. For future research, it is aimed to examine more deeply the specific effects of the post-theoretical approach on various landscape architectural practices and their outcomes. The hermeneutic reading of award-winning projects in different regions and cultures can illuminate how local contexts influence the application of post-theoretical principles. Additionally, investigating the long-term ecological impacts and sustainability of these projects can help evaluate the effectiveness of post-theoretical approaches in addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Such research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving relationship between theory and practice in landscape architecture and guide future developments in this field.

Endnotes

¹ Drenthen (2013) describes landscapes as a text, which can also be interpreted by using hermeneutics and used the term "landscape hermeneutics" to read and interpret landscapes. Even though this is in approach to understand mostly the rural or natural environments, it is also possible that the evaluation of a concept or profession can also be seen as text and interpreted with hermeneutics.

² In Aksaray's historic city center, initiatives are underway to restore and repurpose heritage buildings and the existing ceremonial and planning areas. A comprehensive project has been developed, spanning 6,600 sqm, including multi-story parking facilities and commercial and cultural units. This encompasses urban planning, architectural, and engineering designs to serve the central city and newly defined commercial functions (TMMOBPMO, 2010).

³ Completed in 2012 and operational by 2013, the design emphasizes the needs of physically and mentally disabled children. Recognizing that a physically disabled child might also have mental challenges, the landscape was thoughtfully designed. Features include hobby gardens, animal shelters, outdoor classrooms, and playing fields, ensuring an inclusive environment for all (TMMOBPMO, 2015a).

⁴ The GIS use in the project effectively to identify optimal waste transfer station locations, highlighting areas in the northwest and southwest as prime, and the northeast and southeast as secondary. The study underscores the importance of GIS in environmentally-responsible decision-making (TMMOBPMO, 2016a).

⁵ This project offers a strategic rural development report encompassing feasibility and spatial ideas. Analyzing the region's economic activities emphasizes women's roles in labor and agriculture, proposing a Women Farmers Village. The guide aims to establish growth strategies while preserving the area's uniqueness (TMMOBPMO, 2019a).

⁶ Atatürk City Forest, located in Sarıyer, covers 1,077,767 m². Easily accessible via metro, buses, cars, and walking, it offers parking for 200 vehi-

cles and 200 bicycles. Vehicle entry is restricted, with amenities located near entrances and festival areas. Facilities are accessible for disabled individuals. The forest, rich in flora, fauna, and especially bird species, aims to meet Istanbul's recreational needs while preserving nature (TMMOBPMO, 2021).

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