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# Taiteen ja tekniikan välimaastossa

Rakennustaiteen rahoitus  
2000-luvulla ja arkkitehdin  
työn muutokset



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## *Between art and engineering*

*Public funding of architecture in the 2000s and changes in architects' work*

English Summary

### *Aims and data of the research project*

The study at hand has two purposes: First, to examine architecture's share of the arts support system in the 2000s, and secondly to evaluate the status of architects in present building trade and the possible changes in it. In addition to discussing financial contributions from a quantitative perspective, the study reviews purposes for which individuals and organisations have sought support. The report also provides statistics about applicants and recipients of funding granted by the Arts Council of Finland<sup>49</sup>, the Ministry of Education and Culture<sup>50</sup> and the Ministry of the Environment. The objectives and outcomes of the Finnish architectural policy programme (launched in 1998) are also briefly examined since public funding of architecture and the activities of the National Council for Architecture (NCA) have been closely connected with this programme. As for the issue of status, the basic question is whether the status of architects – and consequently that of architecture – is waning in construction projects, as other professional groups (such as engineers) and operators (such as builders and developers) take over wider fields of activities.

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49 For more information about Finnish art councils, see <http://www.taiteenkeskustoimikunta.fi>.

50 Called until 2010 the Ministry of Education.

A joint database of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Arts Council of Finland is a key source of information for the review of funding. It contains information about the applicants for various grants and subsidies and about the support awarded. Other source materials include archived application materials and decisions made by the NCA from 2001 to 2010. The Arts Council of Finland's previous surveys of art subsidies are also used in the study. The section discussing the status of architects is based on questionnaire and interview material, which was collected for this study in summer and autumn of 2010. The questionnaire was sent to members of the Finnish Association of Architects. Answers were obtained from 641 members and the response rate was slightly over 34 percent. Of these, 11 interviewees were chosen, representing the architect population in terms of age, gender and working sector (private sector entrepreneurs and salaried workers, and public sector architects working in municipalities and state). In addition, 12 interviews were conducted among members of the NCA and officials responsible for architectural policy in the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of the Environment. The total number of interviews was thus 23.

### *State support for architecture in Finland*

Enhancing architecture by developing cultural and art policies is primarily the task of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The ministry is the main actor in preparing legislation and creating art and cultural policies related to architecture, as well as in the funding of architecture from the state budget. Legislation of building and land use, which steers regional planning and building, is conducted in the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry of the Environment has also funded architecture during this period by supporting communities in recruiting regional architects (annually approx. 500,000 €) and granting subsidies for conservation of built heritage (annually approx. 2.4 million €). Moreover, preparation of legislation on regional development strategies carried out in the Ministry of Employment and the Economy affects the quality of built environment, although the ministry does not directly finance architecture. Of the art and cultural policies affecting architecture the most influential has been the first national architectural policy programme, conducted by the Ministry of Education and other actors including the Ministry of the Environment. The programme set out general objectives for creating a good environment in the form of 24 actions. These included e.g. extending the role of regional architects, maintaining the architectural heritage, enhancing architectural education and investing in architectural research. Architectural funding has reflected architectural policy, which can be seen especially in the support of the NCA.

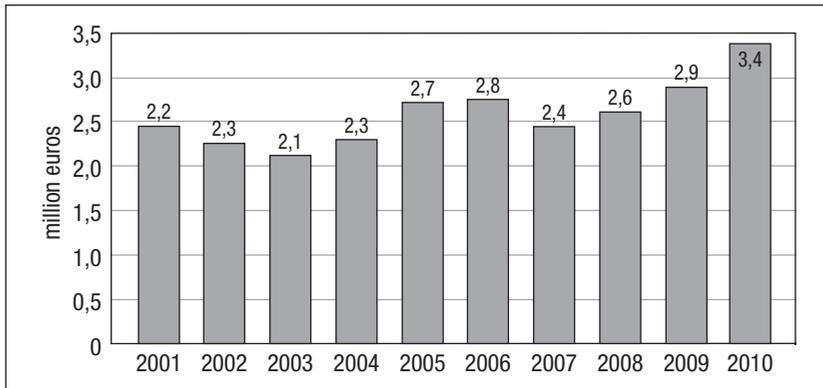
The Ministry of Education and Culture is the main public funder of architecture through its support to architectural institutions and organisations. Most of the public support for architecture, as for all arts, is distributed through the statutory state support to art institutions. Other state support consists of various discretionary grants for art organisations, allocated by the ministry. Subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Culture is the Arts Council of Finland, whose statutory responsibility is to promote and support art, create and develop art policies and conduct research in the field. The Arts Council of Finland consists of the Central Arts Council, National Councils representing different art forms (9) and Regional Arts Councils (13), which promote art at the regional level and award grants to artists and organisations in their provinces. Arts councils award direct, discretionary support for individual artists, working groups and organisations.

The overall support for architecture from the Ministry of Education and Culture steadily grew from 2.2 to 3.4 million €<sup>51</sup> in 2001-2010, although its share of the ministry's total budget for arts and culture has remained relatively at the same, modest level. Annually the relative share has been 0.6–0.9 percent of the budget for arts and culture. In all, the largest recipients in architecture between 2001 and 2010 were The Museum of Finnish Architecture and the Alvar Aalto Museum, even when the state subsidy for museums is not taken into account. From 2008 on, the state subsidy for museums has grown, which explains the growth in support at the end of the decade. In 2010 the subsidy for the museums representing architecture (The Museum of Finnish Architecture and the Alvar Aalto Museum) was 1.1 million €. Still, of the statutory museum subsidies in all art fields the share of architecture has slightly decreased from 3.3 to 3 percent. As enhancing architectural education was one of the objectives of the architectural policy programme, organisations involved in the field have been granted support, although the overall support has been quite modest. The ministry's overall support of architectural education was at its highest in the middle of the period (about 100,000 € in 2005).

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51 Without statutory state subsidy for museums from 1,7 million to 2,2 million.

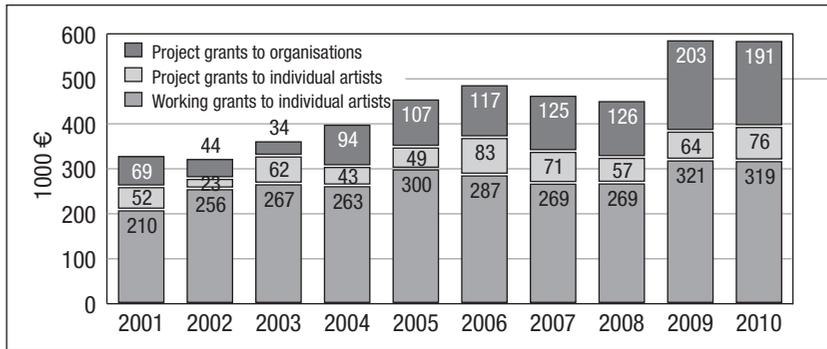
*Graph 1. Support for architecture by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2001-2010*



In this study the funding granted by the Arts Council of Finland (the Central Arts Council, NCA and Regional Arts Councils) has been given more thorough consideration. The support granted by arts councils<sup>52</sup> has grown during the period from slightly over 300,000 € to almost 600,000 €. The support for architecture grew towards the middle of the period, and after two years of recession the support rose again in 2008 to the current level. The growth at the end of the period is due to an increase in working grants for individual artists and grants for organisations. Despite growth in the total sum, the relative share of architecture of the arts council support to the arts has remained comparatively the same, 2–2.5 percent. The arts council's support for architecture is mainly channelled through the NCA, although architecture has received some support (namely grants for children's culture and travel grants) also from the Central Arts Council. The NCA awards working grants to individual artists, project grants to individual artists or working groups and project grants to organisations.

52 Without regional arts councils' support.

Graph 2. Support for architecture by the National Council for Architecture in 2001-2010



Grants for individuals have constituted the largest part of the NCA support in the period, although the relative share of individual support has slightly declined compared to support for organisations. At its highest (2003) the support for individuals was over 90 per cent of all the support for architecture. In 2010 it was two thirds (about 400,000 €) of the total support. Among grants for individual artists in architecture, the relative share of working grants (as compared to individual project grants) has varied during the period, being about 80 per cent in the last four years. Compared to all support forms, the relative share of working grants has slightly declined in the period. In 2010 working grants consisted of 52 per cent of the total support for architecture (the share was 55 % in all fields), whereas at its highest (in 2002) working grants constituted almost three thirds of the total support in architecture and two thirds in all fields. This is mostly due to growth in project-based national lottery funding, whereas working grants are funded through the state budget. Architecture's relative share of working grants for all art fields has been 1.8–2.5 per cent, being slightly over two per cent in the latter part of the period. In the last two years architecture has annually received about 320,000 € as working grants. Of project grants for individuals and working groups, architecture's relative share has been about two per cent during the period, being slightly higher in the last two years. In 2010 the support was 76,000 € when at its lowest (in 2002) it was only one third of this amount.

NCA support for organisations has varied, reflecting on the support allocated for monitoring and enhancing the national architectural policy programme. The support for organisations increased in the latter part of the period: In the last two years the annual support for organisations was about 200,000 €, while in 2003 it was, at its lowest, under 34,000 €. The support for organisations has also grown in comparison with the support for individuals in the latter part of the period. In the last two years the support for organisations has consti-

tuted one third of all support granted by the NCA. Characteristic of NCA support is that funding organisations has been closely tied to the national architectural policy through grants to the Finnish Association of Architects for observing and enhancing the policy objectives. Architectural policy activities have included enhancing architectural education, raising public awareness of architecture among citizens and policymakers and international co-operation through the European Forum for Architectural Policies network. Architectural policy's share of all community support has varied annually between less than 50 per cent to over 90 per cent. In the first two years of the period architectural policy's share was at its highest, as, for instance, in 2010, when its share was slightly over 50 per cent (100,000 €) of all community support (191,000 €). Even though the share of the national architectural policy has decreased during the period, grants allocated by the arts councils have been closely tied to implementing the policy's objectives. There might also be alternative models in funding, such as including architectural policy in the Ministry of Education and Culture budget for arts.

The regional art councils' support to architecture has been quite small in quantity and in relation to their support to other art forms. The annual support for architecture has varied between 50,000 € and 140,000 €, which is from one to three per cent of the total regional art council's support. The support was at its lowest in 2006-2008, after which it has slightly grown in quantity and in relation to other art forms, largely due to the appearance of new regional artists<sup>53</sup> in architecture. The regional support for architecture consists typically of the regional artist system, while other support for individuals and particularly for organisations has been minimal. As the regional support for architecture consists almost entirely of the system of regional artists, many regional councils have not granted any support to the field for several years. At the same time other council support for architecture is concentrated in certain geographical areas (namely the Uusimaa region). Even though the concentration reflects the geographic positioning of architects, it is noteworthy in regard to regional equality.

Outside public funding there has been a notable increase in the financial support to the arts allocated by private foundations in the research period. In architecture, too, support grew in the first half of the period, but after 2007 foundational support for architecture has decreased both in total sum and in comparison to other art fields, as the relative share has declined from two to one per cent. Despite the decrease, foundations' support for architecture is notable in comparison with the total support for architecture, as in the last five-year period the foundations' support for architecture has been about the

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53 The regional arts councils employ regional artists to work as special experts who promote the arts in their own fields in the region.

same as support granted by arts councils. However, arts council support for architecture has slightly increased in the last part of the decade, while foundational support has, as mentioned, declined.

There have been some specific characteristics in the support from the Ministry of Education and Culture compared to other art forms. Until 2006 funding of The Museum of Finnish Architecture was not fully covered within the state subsidy system, as it is for other art museums. The funding was partly allocated from NCA grants. The Finnish Association of Architects has not received an annual subsidy for enhancing architectures' visibility, as have many other art forms. In addition, architecture is not included in the national cultural export strategy (2007), which is partly due to architecture not having its own coordinative organisation and information centre with which to co-operate at the time the strategy was developed. In 2011 the NCA has, among many organisations in the architecture field, introduced an initiative to the Ministry of Education and Culture on establishing such an organisation.

It is difficult to measure exactly how state support has impacted the quality of architecture or the realisation of aims defined in the national architectural policy programme. As the resources for monitoring the outcomes of the programme have been limited, there has not been a systematic follow-up after the evaluation report in 2002. Thus, the focus in architectural policy has been on enhancing the goals instead of monitoring their realisation. However, as also stated in the evaluation report, many goals defined in the architectural policy programme, such as extending the role of regional architects, maintaining architectural heritage by, for example, inventorying the heritage in all the municipalities and enhancing architectural education, have been implemented satisfactorily. The national programme has also encouraged cities, towns and regions to draw up their own local architectural policy programmes. For actualisation of the goals, it seems to be crucial to have clearly defined agents who take the responsibility of carrying out the tasks.

As seen, funding and promoting of architecture in Finland has been divided between the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of the Environment and partly also the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Architecture has not had permanent funding from the state budget; instead the funding has been project-based. As there has been neither a certain actor responsible for architecture, nor permanence in financing, consistent and long-term enhancing of architecture has been challenging. In such a situation there is the risk that architecture as a whole is left to no one's responsibility. In several European countries architecture is organisationally part of the cultural ministry apparatus or there is a separate organisation for architecture funded by several ministries. Such models could be possible in Finland, too.

## *Architects' status and position in construction processes*

Architects' views on their working conditions and their position in construction processes were also addressed in the study. Problematic issues as well as suggestions regarding the current position of architects and architecture will now be briefly discussed. Nine out of ten of interviewees experienced that norms regarding planning and construction have tightened in recent years and as many felt that this has affected their work. Norms were perceived as restrictive, but at the same time ambiguous, which may lead to arbitrary interpretations and even regional inequality as norms may be interpreted differently in different municipalities. Adopting norms which are constantly changing was seen as time-consuming, taking resources from the already insufficiently resourced planning work. Many of the respondents believed that instead of detailed norm systems, building should be guided by exemplary building and best practices. In spring 2011, norms are being revised in the Ministry of the Environment. The aim is to assure the quality in building as a whole, by setting a general level of standards instead of detailed legislation. Based on the study, this seems to be a direction consistent with architects' wishes.

Architects in both the private and public sector felt their possibilities of influencing the building process are restricted, especially compared to contractors, developer consultants and business actors, such as local entrepreneurs. Architects were of the opinion that their influence was limited because project management, which has earlier been architects' responsibility, has been transferred to other actors such as developer consultants. Accordingly, architects felt that maintaining a fast and cost-efficient building process often overrides architectural values. Architects believed that improving their abilities in project management by education would strengthen their position, which, consequently, would ensure that architectural quality is taken into account in the building process. According to architects, customers also have an important role in regard to quality. In the public sector the number of municipal architects is decreasing, and other professionals, such as engineers order planning services. According to architects, this may have a negative effect on architectural quality. In the private sector, making customers more quality-conscious through architectural education was seen as important in this respect. In all, architects experienced that in the construction process there is not enough time allocated to planning, which makes it more difficult to find innovative and fresh solutions. In regard to innovativeness, the state of residential building was seen as especially weak, partly because of the conservativeness of the building industry, partly because, in architects' opinion, the building industry does not have

the motivation to develop as apartments sell irrespective of their architectural quality.

The Finnish procurement laws, namely the Act on Public Contracts, state that all public contracts, including contracts for architectural services, should be subject to an open bid. The aim of the legislation has been non-discriminatory treatment of providers and improvement in quality. However, three out of four respondents felt that the public procurement system affects their work negatively as it in its current form is a hindrance to obtaining good quality in several ways. Architects were of the opinion that affordability overrides quality-based criteria even though attempts have been made to develop systems which take quality into account better. Because every project is subject to open bidding, it is impossible to form permanent business relationships with proven operators. Also, the rule according to which only the past three years are taken into account when evaluating architectural firms was seen as being unfair, positioning small architect firms into an unequal situation with larger companies. Consequently, there has been a centralisation of architectural firms (both in market revenue and in the number of employees) in the 2000s. Architects stated that instead of the current procurement system, architectural quality is better obtained through architect competitions, which provide the opportunity to create and develop ideas more freely than in everyday work as an architect. Competitions also give architects opportunities for professional growth and development which, consequently, has a positive effect on architecture as a whole.

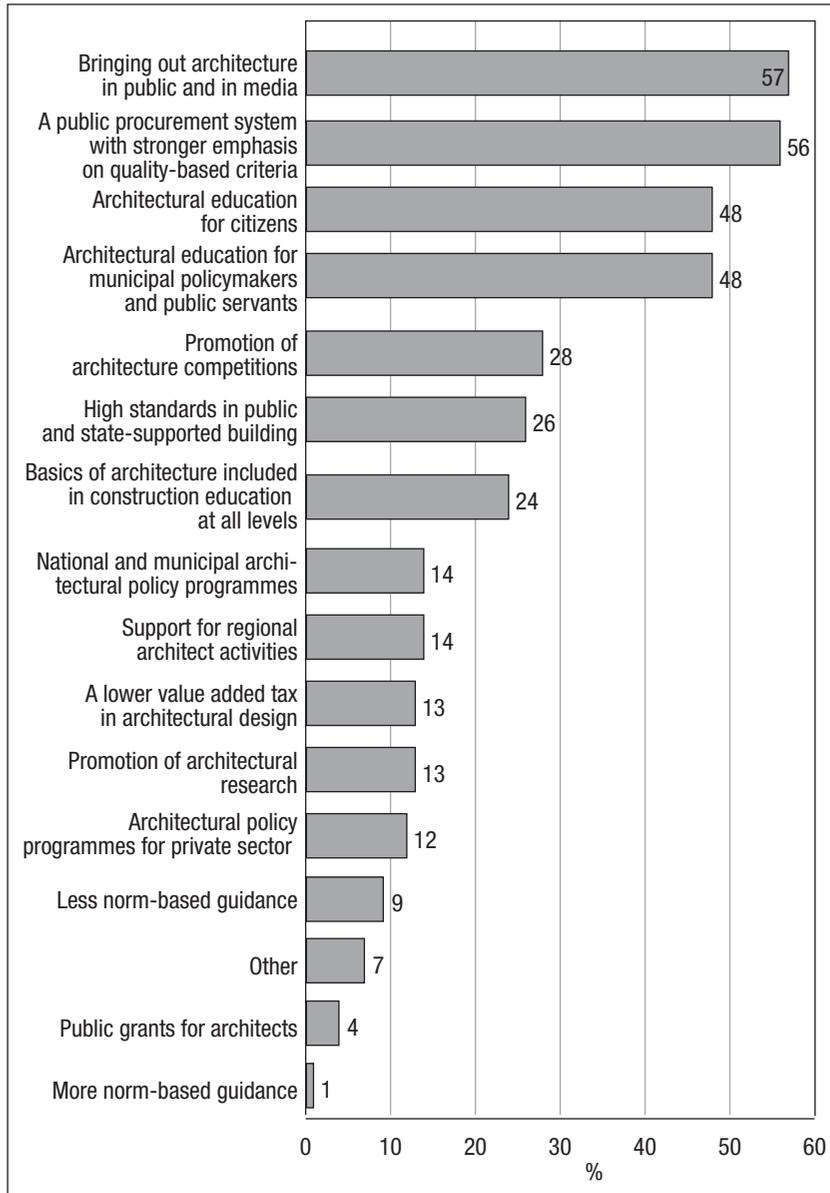
Employees in the private sector differed somewhat from architectural entrepreneurs as well as employees in the public sector (municipalities and state) regarding work satisfaction and perceived possibilities of having greater influence. Employees in the private sector had more time-related pressures than other architects and they felt more often that time allocated for planning was inadequate. They also experienced more difficulties in influencing the quality of their work and in having their objectives approved. As employees in the private sector are typically younger than other architects, this can be partly, but not entirely, due to their shorter work experience. Inside the workplace salaried architects' influence might weaken even more if architectural firms grow, even though larger firms may have more influence on the other actors in the construction field.

In improving architects' position the most important actions according to respondents and interviewees were higher income, improving architects' status in relation to other actors in the field and authorising the profession so that only actors who fulfil certain qualification can practice architectural planning. Higher income and improving architects' status were particularly important for salaried architects in the private sector, while authorising the profession was particularly important for architects working in the public sector and

for architects with longer work experience. It is also noteworthy that restructuring architectural education to respond to demands at work was more often important for architects in the public sector than for others. Architects typically compared themselves to engineers both in the context of income and in perceived status among actors in the construction industry, as engineers were seen to overshadow architects in both regards.

In improving architecture's current position the most important actions according to respondents and interviewees were: bringing out architectural issues in public and in the media, a different system of public procurement and architectural education both for the general public and public servants and municipal policymakers. The actions were considered important by architects working in both public and private sectors, although there were some differences in emphasis. Architectural education was most important for architects working in the public sector, where especially municipal architects valued educating municipal policymakers. Furthermore, in the public sector, architects working for the state supported a different public procurement system, while municipal architects, perhaps surprisingly, were more satisfied with the current system than others. Raising public awareness of architecture and furthering architectural education were also aims defined in the first architectural policy programme. In light of the study it is important to continue working on these areas.

Graph 3. Most important actions in improving architectures current position



Regarding professional image, architects saw themselves as problem solvers who combine the aesthetic, functional, technical and economic aspects of construction in a unique way. Other actors were seen as neither possessing the capabilities for nor having the interest in making this kind of synthesis. In architects' opinion, an architect is the only actor in the building process who can take farsighted responsibility for the quality of the outcome, as opposed to other actors with more short-term, economic interests. Still, architects did not position archi-

tecture or architects merely in the art field since they felt architects' many-sided competence might then be ignored. This, in turn, would undermine their position and influence among other operators in the field.

In architects' work, the ability to create artistically high-level solutions, the sense of architectural harmony and the skill to create novel solutions were typical aspects considered important in principal, but which were not seen as a crucial part of one's own work as an architect. The difference between general artistic qualities and attributes needed in one's own work recurred in all working sectors. Accordingly, architects' main professional ambitions were not related to artistic creation, whereas functionality, fulfilling users' needs and improving people's living environment were the most important professional goals. In architectural education respondents did not require more education in art-related aspects of the profession whereas architects in all working fields felt they lacked education in project management, negotiation and management skills. At the time of writing attempts are being made to restructure architectural education at the Aalto University so that instead of being a part of the School of Engineering, it would be more closely connected to the School of Art and Design. In the light of this study, this does not seem to be an orientation architects require.

Architects typically earn their income from architectural work, which differentiates them from artists in other fields, who are more dependent on support provided by the governmental art support system. This can be seen in the number of applications to arts councils, which is relatively low compared to many other art forms. According to the study architects did not bring up state support for architecture as a central procedure for enhancing architecture. Still, they saw the state as having an important role in supporting architecture through the enhancement of architectural education and the support of architectural competitions, as well as an example in public building. Architects felt that if architecture is left solely to commercial actors, architecture will be reduced to mere business activity, which leaves little space for development of architecture as an art form.