

## Article

# Analyzing the Place of Isparta Governor's Building in the Urban Memory

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**Abstract:** Public buildings, which have an essential place in the urbanization process, reveal their existence in the city through their location. Depending on the selection of the site, how memory is shaped and oriented or whether memory enters an extinction cycle forms the main problem of this study. Public spaces in the city center hold an essential place in urban memory. These spaces hold a place in the urban memory in terms of social and cultural architecture, which are elements that are built in line with the city's administrative, educational, and military needs. Then, they become a remarkable part of a city's social life. The main frame of the study is the Governor's Office of the City of Isparta in the Mediterranean Region of Türkiye. This study aims to discuss the practices in which the social life of the city of Isparta takes place in the memory of the city. Several relevant official and other documents were obtained and examined to reveal the relationship between memory and place. The meaning of the building, news about the building, opinion articles, and texts were analyzed.

**Keywords:** urban memory; space; place; Governor's Office; Government House; Isparta



**Citation:** Akdağ, Nurcihan, and Şefika Gülin Beyhan. 2023. Analyzing the Place of Isparta Governor's Building in the Urban Memory. *Arts* 12: 241. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts12060241>

Academic Editor: John Zarobell

Received: 19 July 2023

Revised: 28 October 2023

Accepted: 6 November 2023

Published: 21 November 2023



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## 1. Introduction

The Governor's Office is one of the most important public spaces in the city center of Isparta. The spatial and physical existence of the Isparta Governor's Office is visible in today's city. To reveal the location of the building in the urban space, its architectural features, its meaning in social and administrative life, and its place in the city's memory, a literature review was initially conducted. This study uses Pierre Nora's works to discuss the relationship between memory and space in the conceptual dimension.

Isparta Governor's Office has been a public building for about 85 years ([Türkiye Culture Portal 2023](#)). It has witnessed many periodic architectural changes since it is located in the historical center of Isparta City. With its settlement in the city center, the building has the potential to affect urban memory with all the buildings around it directly. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the Government House was located in the same place before the Governor's Office appeared. This study aims to raise awareness of the disappearance of urban memory traces in the city center. The destruction of the Government House, which directly led to the construction of the Governor's Building, should be regarded as a memory loss. Although the Government House, which conveyed information about the city's architecture of the past ([Aydar 1945](#)), as well as its administration and social life, is erased from the memory of the citizens, it continues to live in the daily speeches, directions, and memories of the citizens ([Oral Interview 2023](#)).

## 2. Conceptual Explanations

With an increasing interest in memory in the twentieth century, philosophy and psychology have more insight into memory processes than in previous generations. Their overall results highlight the accidental nature of memory, its vulnerability to forgetfulness

and repressive forces, and reveal its existence as an urban memory element (Forty 2005). The representations of memory grow into a tool for building the city with forward and retroactive actions of remembering cities (Bastéa 2004).

Urban memory, defined as anthropomorphism (the city with memory), can be defined as a physical landscape and a collection of objects and practices that embody the past through traces of successive construction and reconstruction (Crinson 2005). Henry Lefebvre's intertwined 'practice of extending forward the scope of human activities', 'representations of space', 'representational space' or, as he interchangeably refers to, the 'lived, conceived and perceived realms' of life provide a tool for distinguishing objects (Bastéa 2004; Lefebvre 2014).

The components that Crinson (2005) define as 'urban memory', which have been addressed in various recent projects examining the relationship between memory and urban space, also serve as powerful symbols and memory stores according to Ladd (1997). Thus, urban memory provides a way to assess how various strata of society and different communities have built the metropolitan world (Rose-Redwood et al. 2008). The phenomenon of place according to the architectural historian and critic Christian Norberg-Schulz and Aldo Rossi's studies on the term urban memory are studies that reveal the relationship between urban memory, space, and place. Aldo Rossi considers memory in the context of the city's physical environment, and he states that the city's memory is formed by the people living there and memory is related to elements and place (Rossi 1984). Urban memory has multidimensional components not limited to just one event or location. The city's architectural formation, development, and transformation feed the urban memory. Edward Nilsson's (2017) 'Urban Memory and Preservation in Kuwait: A Case Study of Souk Al Wataniya the City of Kuwait' was chosen as the research material; the urban building types of Kuwait were discussed, and data on the urban memory were the subject of the study. He mentions that today the housing situation in the city center of Kuwait has caused transitions from residential use to commercial use and has caused much destruction and that many modern buildings have been destroyed or replaced with high-rise buildings. This encourages the architectural preservation community to develop the low-rise traditional buildings of the early 20th century and preserve memory images of the city's historic past.

Some of the national and international studies that include oral history, cognitive, and perception techniques are as follows: Lak and Hakimian (2019) in Pantea's study titled 'Collective Memory and Urban Transformation in Urban Spaces' aimed to contribute to the reproduction of memories in Baharestan Square in Tehran, Iran. Identity inquiries were made on Baharestan Square, which is the symbol of modernization in Tehran, Iran, and the historical and cultural structure and environmental arrangements of the place were evaluated. A theoretical model was developed to maintain and rebuild the features of collective memory in urban spaces in the study because of the eroding aspect of collective memory due to the loss of social belonging caused by urban transformation.

Habrel and Habrel (2021) in the study titled 'The Phenomenon of Urban Memory as A Wholeness of Time' aimed to systematically comprehend the urban phenomenon and space within the parameters of memory, to understand the memory of the city, to consider it as a temporal dimension, and to reveal the memory of the city. The study dealt with city dwellers as well as graphic analytical and cartographic methods.

Öymen Özak and Pulat Gökmen (2009) in their study titled 'A Model Proposal on the Relationship between Memory and Space', created a proposed model, which was designed to reveal the relationship between space and memory, based on the idea that individual characteristics and physical and social environmental characteristics are effective in the formation of elements that have been preserved in permanent memory from past to present in the space-individual relationship. According to the proposed model, the time factor is an important element in placing the place in the individual's memory. Various studies have shown that positive or negative experiences in the past create differences in the individual's perception of space today.

Cities exist by accumulating the memories of the citizens and their physical conditions. Even though the past is seemingly destroyed and lost, the mind remembers memories. It reconstructs them by locating them so that the memory appears to be a copy of past periods rather than a preservation (Halbwachs 2019). In the study by Chen et al. (2020), called *Contested Memory Amidst Rapid Urban Transition: Cultural Politics of Urban Regeneration in Guangzhou, China*, a mixed-method approach was used to collect data including articles, archival research, one-on-one interviews, and on-site observations as a research method, and fieldwork was conducted to gather information about how culture is presented and how cultural facilities are used in local areas.

Memories are reproduced together with the social environment to which the individual belongs. Everyone becomes a subject of memory when reproducing the past (Halbwachs 1992). Some factors are of great importance for the transformation of memory. Memory exists not only in the form of archives and monuments but also as embodied memory transmitted between three to four generations living and interacting in a simultaneous relationship. According to the researchers, this situation is shaped by the decisive life experiences that affect each generation, thoughts, and feelings. It includes values, attachments, mindsets, and feelings of the past. This generational memory is not only passed down from generation to generation, periodically, it is questioned and refuted as well (Assmann 2015).

Intergenerational dynamics are a central factor in changing the course of life. National memory becomes evident not only in narratives but also in spaces (Assmann 2015). With its works of Early Republican architecture, such as the square, streets, and monuments, the Governor's Office is a memory element in which the memory becomes evident in the space.

Nora defines 'Lieux De Mémoire (places of memory)' as areas that anchor, concentrate and express the depleted capital of our collective memory. Just as history is connected to events, memory is attached to and embodied in spaces (Nora 1984, 2006).

Since Nora's research was published, it has gained significant recognition as a reference term in memory studies. According to Nora, memory is embodied at specific sites where historical continuity persists. In Pierre Nora's words, there are 'Lieux De Mémoire (places of memory)', defined as areas where "memory crystallizes and conceals itself" or "anchors, concentrates and expresses the depleted capital of our collective memory" (Achille et al. 2020; Nora 1984, 2006).

In his 'lieux de mémoire' project, which began with his inaugural seminar at 'The École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales' in 1977, Nora gave new meaning to the concept of 'lieux de mémoire', but it should not be ignored that the given meaning will constantly change. According to Nora the existence of common and individual mobile spaces, memory spaces are open to constant change and transformation of their meanings. The study aims to raise awareness of the loss of traces of urban memory in the city center (Den Boer 2008).

This study aims to assess the memory of the spaces by considering the components that make up urban memory. These components are formed by establishing the connection of memory with space. The places where memory is connected are of two types: The first is material, although sometimes less material; a palpable, intelligible reality inscribed in time, language, and tradition. The other is a purely symbolic reality sheltering history. In this context, the research consists of two parts. First, a 'historical reading' of the structures that are the subject of the study is conducted. Secondly, to analyze the placement of the buildings in the urban memory, 'The Place in Social Life' is discussed, which is how the items that are part of tradition find a place in society through these spaces.

The study aims to raise awareness of the loss of urban memory traces in the city center. In this context, the research consists of three parts. First, a 'historical reading' of the buildings subject to the research was carried out. In-depth research was carried out on the Isparta city history archive and the historian/writer who is the focus of the subject. Information about the buildings was obtained by interviewing the source person. Secondly, in the study, supported by qualitative research methods in addition to the historical analysis of the buildings, spatial analyses were also made based on original analyses on an urban

and architectural scale. Finally, in order to assess the place of the buildings in the urban memory, the elements rooted in tradition were analyzed. The subject is 'Its Place in Social Life', or how it finds a response in society.

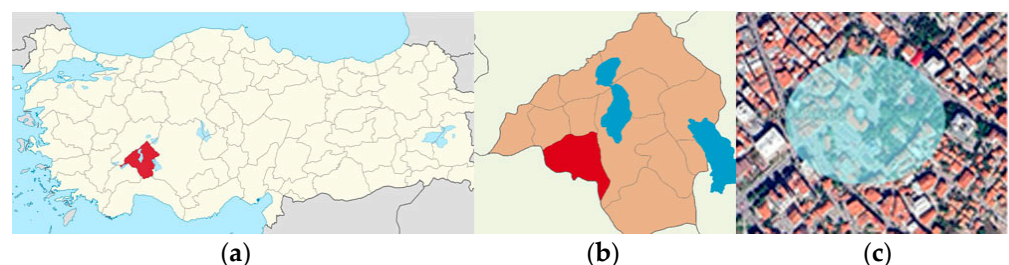
### 3. A Historical Read

Isparta witnessed important development activities during the Ottoman period. During the reign of Firdevs Bey, the mosque and covered bazaar, which are among Architect Sinan's works, were built. Towards the end of the 18th century, Isparta gained important structures thanks to Hamid Pasha. Isparta Sanjak was a very calm and quiet province during the 19th century. From the 1882 Konya Provincial Yearbook the following information is available about the population of the Isparta Central district. There was a total of 28,156 Muslims, of whom 14,251 were women and 13,905 were men, 4402 were Greek Orthodox, 551 Armenians, and a total of 33,109 people lived there (Isparta Provincial Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2023b). Isparta was one of the few cities affected by the occupation and conflicts during the Armistice and National Struggle Period between 1919 and 1923. Isparta and its districts developed in two phases during the Republican period. The first was until 1960. Social, economic, and public works were carried out in this period. The second development phase of Isparta in Republican Türkiye began after 1960. Since this date, it is seen that the development process has increased and especially industrialization and urbanization movements have gained importance (Isparta Provincial Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2023b).

Isparta had primary public works services from the Republican years until 1960. It has developed significantly in terms of economy, especially with the development of rose farming and carpet weaving. In 1936, Isparta's access to the railway affected urban development positively (Isparta Provincial Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2023b). From 1960 to the present day, many social, educational, health, and industrial facilities have been established in Isparta, where modern urbanization has shown its effect rapidly.

The Tanzimat Edict and the innovations after that transformed the Ottoman Empire centered in Istanbul. An example of this is the construction of the old Government Building (1888–1889), which was the foremost construction activity in Isparta. In addition, as the urbanization activities were carried out with the proclamation of the Republic, new types of spaces were needed throughout the city. Government Houses are seen as one of the most important building types that enable the differentiation between traditional life, social and cultural life, cities, and ideology to be analyzed through space.

The old Government Office, the New Government Office, and the Governor's Office, which are among the administrative buildings located in the city center of Isparta (Figure 1) (Url-1, Url-2). in the Lakes region of the Mediterranean coastal part of Türkiye, are the subject of this study.



**Figure 1.** Türkiye Map: (a) (Url-1 Türkiye Map n.d.); Isparta City: (b) (Url-2 Türkiye Map n.d.); Isparta City Center Governor's Office: (c) in 2023 (Google Earth 2023).

Isparta's first Government Office was built as a two-story wooden structure located in the old Mosque Atik (Old Mosque) neighborhood (today Kutlubey) where Kutlubey Mosque (Ulu/Great Mosque) is located. Because the building was unusable, a new Gov-

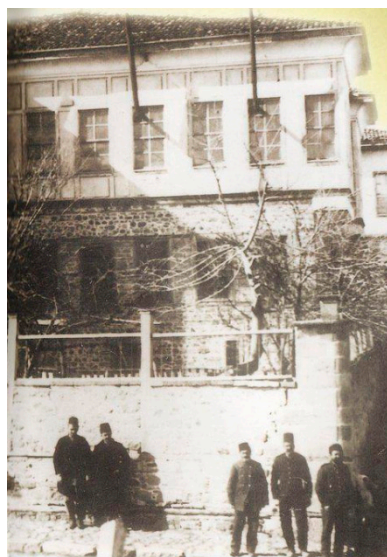
ernment House was built by Governor Tahsin Pasha in 1880 (Böcüzade 2012). The image of the building called the old Government House is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** The first Government House was in 1888 (Anonymous 2001).

The photo was taken in 1888–1889 by a person named Lazeraydisa. It was built during the reign of the Ottoman State in 1876, during the time of Governor Hasan Tahsin Pasha (Anonymous 2001). The building did not survive to the present day.

The Isparta Government House was built on flat land with a rectangular plan. The building was in the northwest–southeast direction, and the entrance of the building was on the northeast facade. Access to the building was provided from the garden courtyard of the building. Details of the garden walls, which were built up to a certain height to ensure privacy in traditional Turkish Architecture, are also available in the Government House. The most striking part of the building was the bay window at the entrance. The bay window highlighted the entrance. The building was symmetrically balanced when the main entrance door is considered an axis. Windows at the same rate and extent showed the repetition feature. The windows of the building were of equal size, and the upper floor was built in the form of a slight protrusion. There were ornamental details, such as a symmetrical arrangement on the windows (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Detail of the Government House facade in 1888 (Anonymous 2001).

The ground floor walls of the two-story building were covered with stone material. The whole building was built of wooden material and masonry/rockwork. As a traditional roof covering, the top of the building was covered with a tiled hipped roof.

As a result of the destruction of Isparta's first Government Office for an unknown reason, a new Government Office was built in the same place. The second Government House of Isparta, of which the construction date is unknown, is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** The second Government House in 1930 (Anonymous 2001).

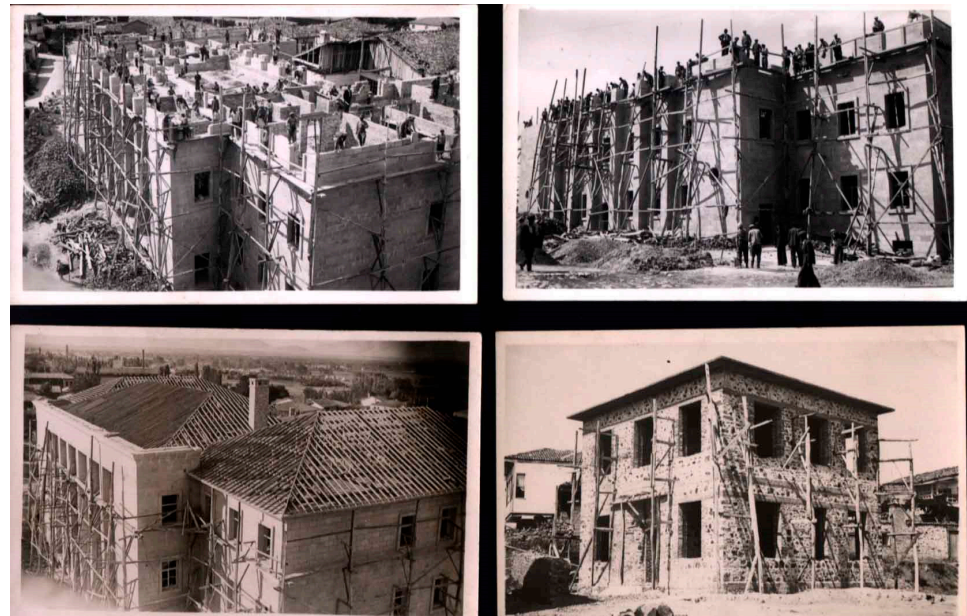
The Government House in the image of 1930 has a rectangular plan. When it was first built, the entrance to the building was from the garden courtyard. Later, it is seen that the introverted structure of the building changed with the demolition of the garden walls and served as a public space (Figure 5). The balcony detail in the building emphasized the entrance. Modernization processes and periods of societies have affected traditional life perceptions or spatial patterns. As an example of this, the outward-looking administrative structure of the old Government House, with its traditional architecture, was remarkable. The facade detail, which allowed the administration to address from the balcony, is amazing<sup>1</sup>.

The building was symmetrically balanced when the main entrance door is considered an axis. In the two-story building, the window sequences were arranged in a particular order and show the feature of repetition. The building was constructed from wooden material and masonry/rockwork. As a traditional roof covering, the top of the building was covered with a tiled hipped roof.



**Figure 5.** Government House as public space in 1888 (Anonymous 2001).

According to Böcüzade (2012), the old Government House became unusable because of a fire and was demolished in 1937 and replaced by the Governor's Office between 1938 and 1940 (Figure 6). The building, which was put out to tender and was started to be built in 1937 (Türkiye Culture Portal 2023), is called the New Government House because it was built in the same place as the other Government House structures, as shown in the sources (Aydar 1945).



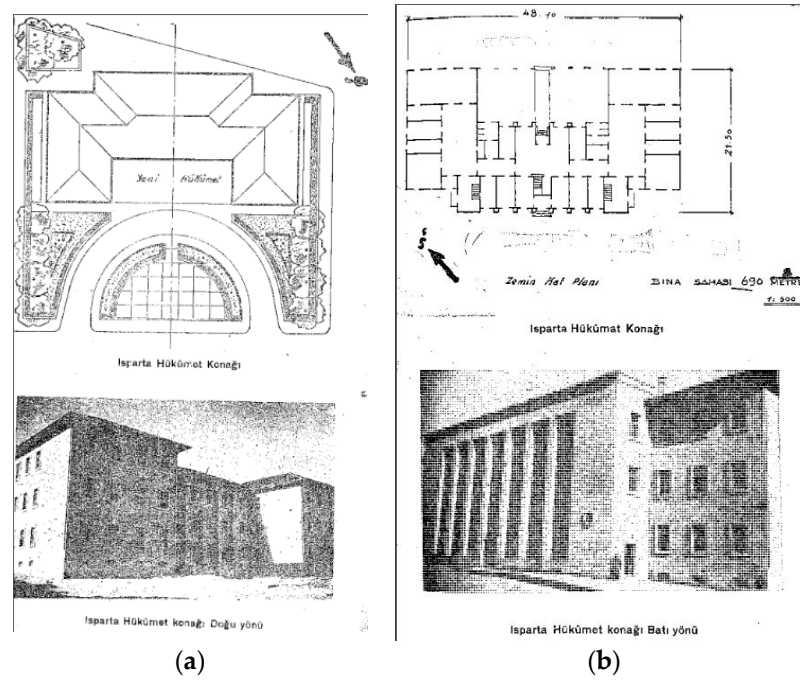
**Figure 6.** Construction of the Governor's Office in 1938–1940 ([Anonymous 2001](#)).

The building had four floors with a basement and consisted of rectangular prisms. On the outer walls, neatly cut stones were used<sup>2</sup>. It contributed positively to the region's local character as it used a selection of local materials. The building was built in a new classical style, which was different from traditional architecture. It was positioned outward from both sides. The entrance staircase in the middle of the main facade was one of the elements that gave the building its identity. As a form, this staircase was used as a design element reflecting the classical 'Podio' motif<sup>3</sup>. The entrance staircase gave the building monumentality.

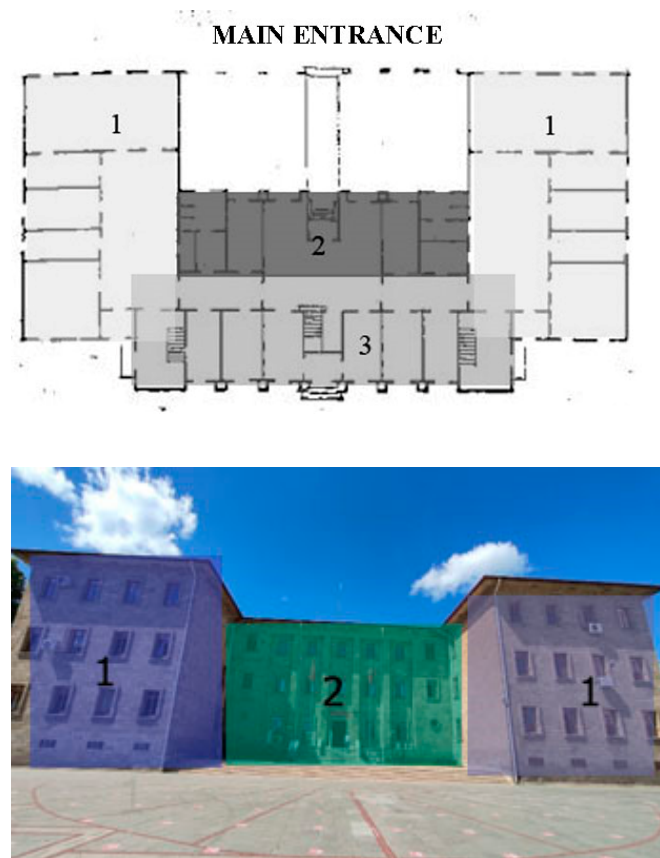
Vast halls and spaces opened to the galleries at both ends of the planning scheme. The areas were adjacent. The central organization was seen as a spatial arrangement in the building (Figure 7). Space organizations open a functional door for us to understand and gain a deeper understanding of socio-spatial processes. While a change in social organization affects space organization, the opposite is also true. The easiest way to make this situation more visible is to emphasize the connection between "work" in social organization and "use" in space organization ([Hovardaoglu 2020](#)).

After the entrance hall, a large corridor extending in the east–west direction, where the rooms open, was entered. Arrival to the upper floors was provided with wooden-covered, unadorned iron railing stairs located opposite the entrance and at the end of the corridor. There was no decoration in the rooms and corridors. The windows of the building were of equal size and their jambs were made prominent by making them slightly protrude from the building wall. The smaller basement windows were barred. On the first floor of the building, round windows illuminated the staircase on the central and south facades. In addition, a small entrance with a keystone-accentuated iron door was in the middle of the south facade. It was covered with a tiled hipped roof ([Isparta Provincial Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2023b](#)).

The ground floor plan of the Governorship Building, which is in active service today, shown in Figure 8, was accessed from the article titled 'Public Works of Isparta Province and the New Government Mansion', published in *Ün Magazine* in 1945. Markings were made on the ground floor plan.



**Figure 7.** Layout and views of the Governor's Office in 1938–1940: (a); plans and views of the Governor's Office, the public works of Isparta Province in 1938–1940: (b) (Aydar 1945).

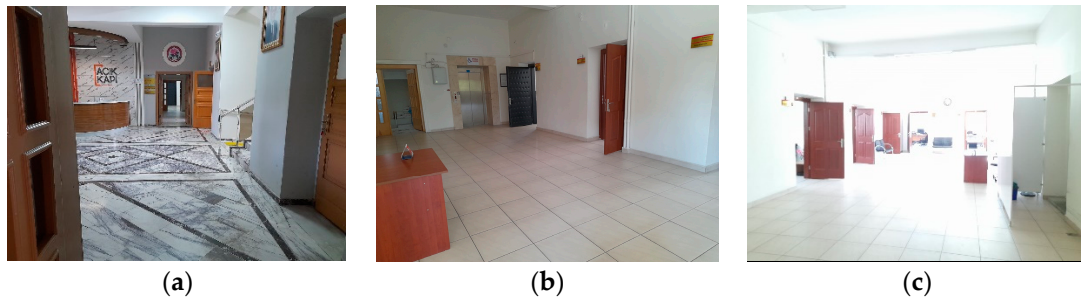


**Figure 8.** Ground floor plan of the Governor's Office. Image coordinated by Nurcihan Akdağ 20 June 2023 (Aydar 1945; Akdağ 2017–2023).

In the first part are offices and service rooms; in the second section is the security and switchboard section; in the third section, circulation (stairs, hall) units are located.

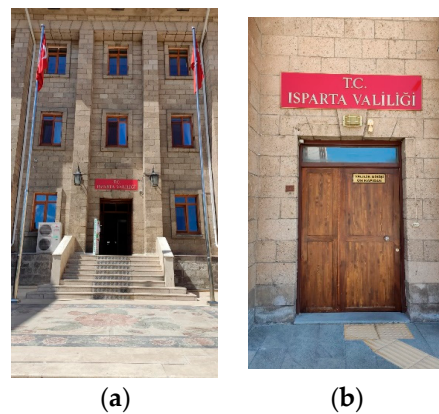


The interior is arranged within the bounds of current material and technology possibilities. In the design of the space, attention was paid to user requirements and human anthropometric measurements. In Figure 9, there could be seen visuals of the interior of the building: the main hall, the entrance hall of the administrative rooms, the apartment rooms, and the fire exit door.



**Figure 9.** Interior Image: (a); interior Image: (b); interior Image: (c). Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 15 June 2023.

The functionality of a public building depends on an appropriate relationship between the spaces of the building. Public buildings should have spaces and comforts that can serve all citizens, including people with disabilities. In this context, it is seen that a disabled analysis was conducted in the structure. There is a main entrance, rear entrance (accessible entrance for people with disabilities or special needs) (Figure 10), and fire escape entrance/exit doors (Figure 11) in the Governor's Office. The corridor widths of the building provide spatial comfort. The structure responds to the needs of the user profile and is functional.



**Figure 10.** Main entrance: (a); rear entrance door: (b). Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 10 June 2023.



**Figure 11.** Fire escape and entry: (a); exit doors: (b). Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 10 June 2023.

To Carr et al. (1992), the image of a public structure invites or repels people. The Governor's Office also has an inviting appearance that is almost an interface between tradition and modernity. Figure 12 shows the front view of the building.



**Figure 12.** Isparta Governor's Office front view. Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 10 June 2023.

The building material, form, facade arrangement, and roof system are integral. The building is more prominent in scale than the small-scale shops and residential fabric around it. There is a plain and straightforward facade understanding in the visual hierarchy of the building. There is no focal point in visual perception. The windows on the facades have similar proportions and scales. The choice of materials and ratios of building elements also ensures continuity. The dark color choice used in the building represents formality. The rational form and symmetry of the structure make it easy to remember.

As a result, the construction reflects traditionality, with elements made of local materials, and modernity with its simple and rational architectural effect. The Governor's Office is a monumental feature due to the perception of the building as a whole and because it is higher than the surrounding buildings, the kövke stone brings seriousness to the building (Çelebi 2011). In addition, the building represents modern life with its public square area (Beyhan 2016). Figures 13–15 show the facade views of the building.



**Figure 13.** Isparta Governorship Building rear view. Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 10 June 2023.

These three structures have the potential to be the focal point of Isparta City's urban and architectural environment (from the 19th century to the present). Nora has stated that it indicates a memory recorded in the place. Even though the space changes, the collective memory continues to exist as the meaning of the physical space clings to the symbolic meaning. Continuity expands into infinity. This continuity continues to be produced in space, from a monumental building to the name of a street and to the architectural and residential fabric. Therefore, since the 19th century, from the first Government House built

in the center of the city to the construction of today's Governorship Building, the historical aspect of the street has shaped the street pattern, which has changed with development activities and the daily street life and living habits from past to present.



**Figure 14.** Left side facade. Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 10 June 2023.



**Figure 15.** Right side facade. Photo by Nurcihan Akdağ 10 June 2023.

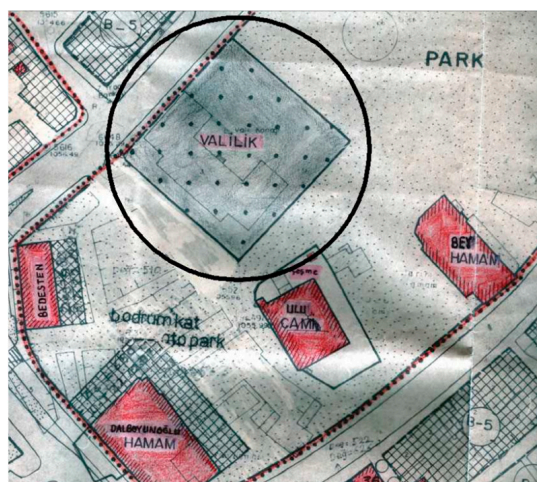
According to [Nora \(1989, 2006\)](#), just as history is connected to events, memory is connected to places. Memory emerges especially as the feeling of belonging to the nation becomes stronger. The feature of belonging to the nation is strengthened through ceremonies, holidays, and various celebrations. The Government House has taken an active role in the administrative aspects of preserving and sustaining national and local values since the day it was established in the 19th century. Therefore, the Government Mansion, which has changed into three different structures from past to present, nourishes the urban memory by capturing continuity with the meaning it carries.

#### **4. The Place of the Isparta Governor's Office in Urban Memory**

In everyday life, places are "significant for learning about who we are and our cultural life". Therefore, the 'concept of place' results from place-oriented belonging ([Anderson 2015](#)). According to Lefebvre, the concept of place takes its meaning from the political and economic forces of spatial production in material and social forms and class relations ([Lefebvre 1993](#)).

It is necessary not to think of the place as just a limited place. There are different forms of experience towards the place and the meanings formed by these forms of expertise. These meanings also affect urban memory. Therefore, the concepts of space, place, and memory should be considered intertwined phenomena.

The Kutlubey Neighborhood, where the oldest historical buildings of Isparta are located, is on İstasyon Street (Figure 16).



**Figure 16.** Governor's Office (Türkiye Culture Portal 2023).

Dalboyunoğlu Vakıf (Foundation/Vakf) Hamam is located south of the building in the city center, Firdevs Bey Bedesten<sup>4</sup> is located southwest, Bey Hamam east, the PTT (Post Office) Building and the Historical Grape Market west, and Isparta Grand Park north. From the past to the present, the Governor's Office has been intertwined with residential, commercial, educational, social, and religious buildings (Figure 17).



**Figure 17.** 1959 Governorate Building and its surroundings (Anonymous 2001). Image coordinated by Nurcihan Akdağ 20 June 2023.

In addition, the walking paths connected to the square within the street pattern are complementary elements of the Government Building. Located in an area with heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic, the Governor's Office has a strong spatial relationship with the city of which it is a part.

In the urban space, it is an essential criterion that the designed building is accessible in terms of the suitability of the urban part in terms of design. The Governor's Office, from the past to the present, has been in a position that faces the main street and is accessible to city passengers and intercity travelers regarding transportation routes (Figure 18).

It is located in the historical city center at the intersection of Hasan Fehmi, Mimar Sinan, and İstasyon Street routes. The Nazım zoning plans showing the roads and avenues of the Governor's Office and its surroundings from the first years of its construction to the present are given in Figures 19–21.

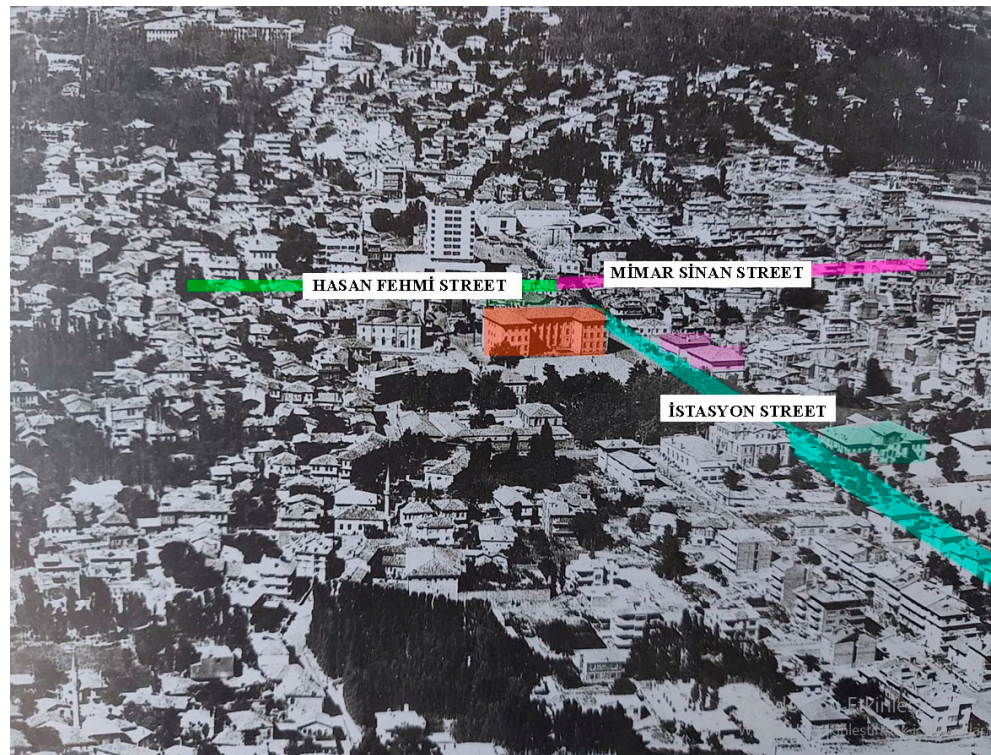


Figure 18. The Governor's Office in 1975 and its surroundings (Anonymous 2001). Image coordinated by Nurcihan Akdağ 20 June 2023.

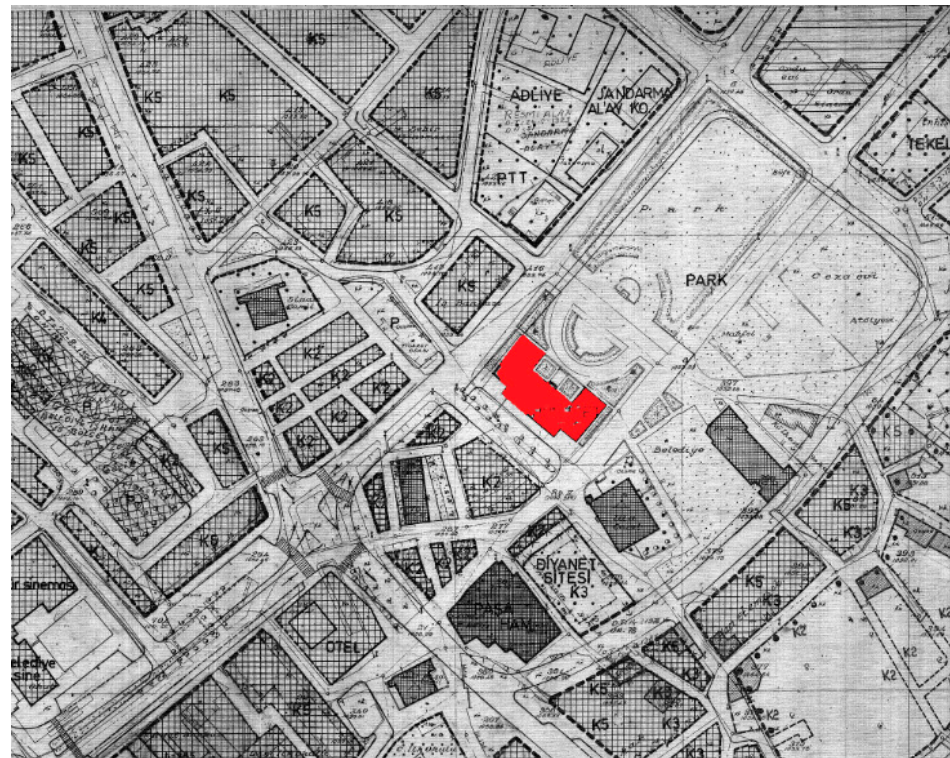
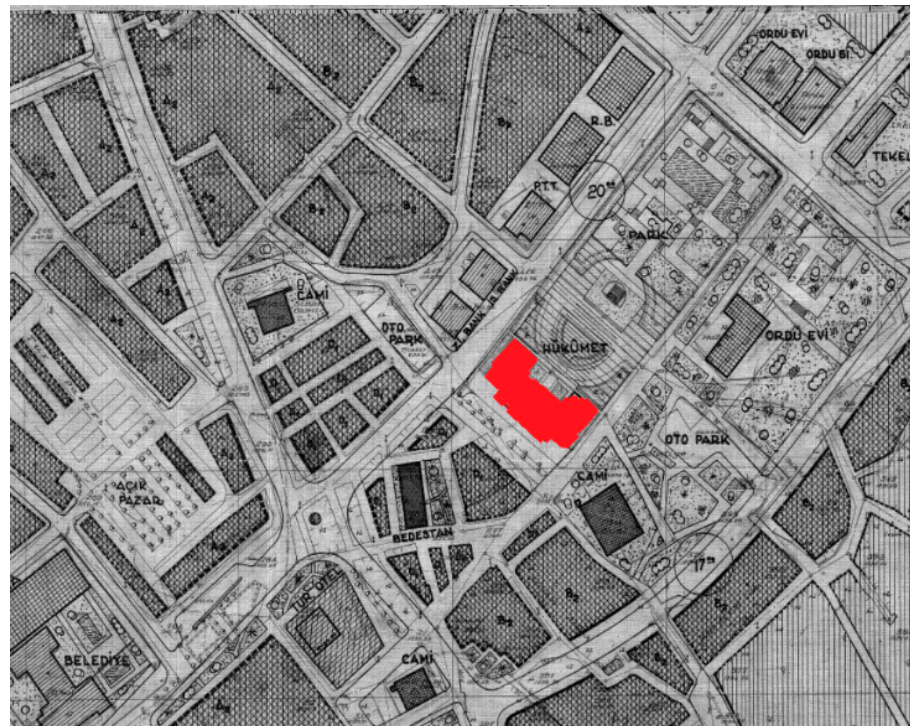


Figure 19. Zoning plan map location of the Governor's Office in the city center in 1967 (Isparta Municipality Zoning Directorate 2023).

In 1935, the first reconstruction works for Isparta started. In 1939, a current map of the city was prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Municipalities Science Committee Chief. Professor Gustav Oelsner and Assoc. Prof. Kemal Ahmet Aru completed a ready-made city map in 1943 (Aydar 1944). Arrangements were made on the street and its surroundings in the zoning plan (Isparta Zoning Plan Report 1943).

The commercial units located in the Kebapçılar Arastasi<sup>5</sup> (in the southwest direction), rows of stores (in the northwest), one of the essential retail centers of the city, and the Tekel Building, which took place in the urban memory in the 1967 zoning plan (Eastern direction), are located. These places, which were essential administrative, commercial, and social structures of the city, have not reached the present day.

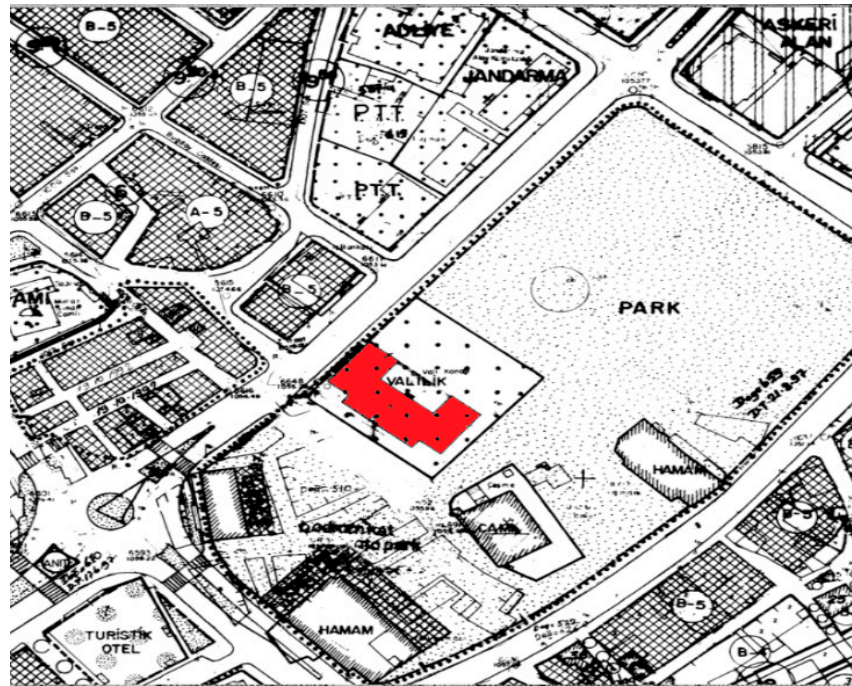


**Figure 20.** Location of the Governor's Building in the city center, 1977 zoning plan map (Isparta Municipality Zoning Directorate 2023).

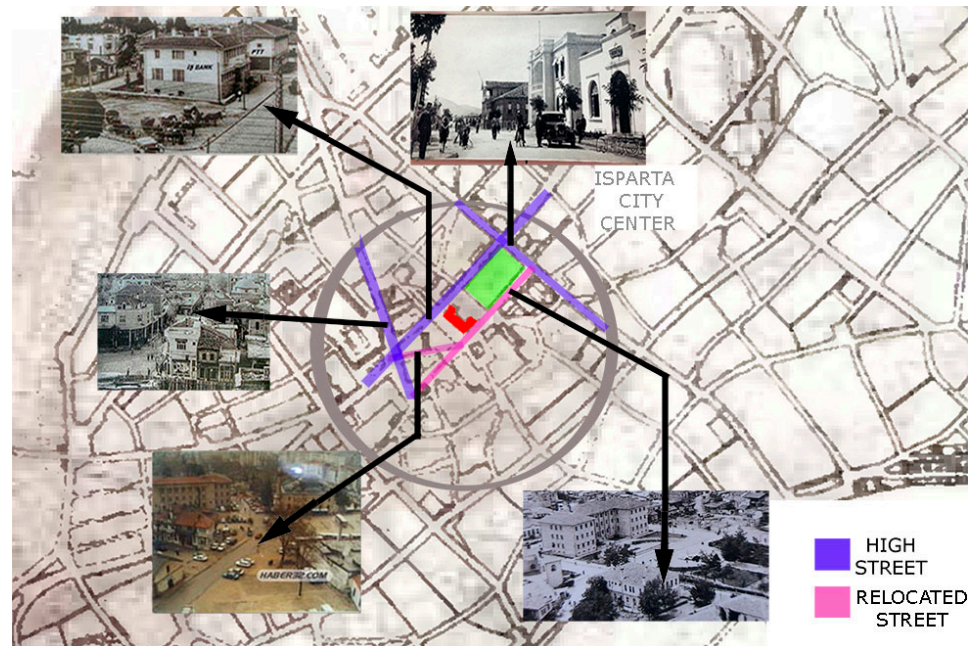
The City Hall and the prison were demolished in the 1970s in the context of strategies for construction ideologies. It is narrated that rows of stores and open market areas in the city center acted as commercial centers then. The Governor's Office is directly related to the commercial center.

By the 1990s, the existing surface of the park area around the Governor's Building was expanded. With the collapse of the Kebapçılar Arastasi, the demolition of the rows of stores, and small-scale commercial centers in the city center leaving their places to other retail shops, radical changes have occurred around the building (Figures 22 and 23).

It is in question that the desired level of squareness could not be realized due to the scale of the infrastructure of the Isparta city center and the road widths around the building from the first years of its construction to the present. The former Government Square is today's 15 July Democracy and Republic Square. Various solutions are sought for the square with projects that will come into effect.



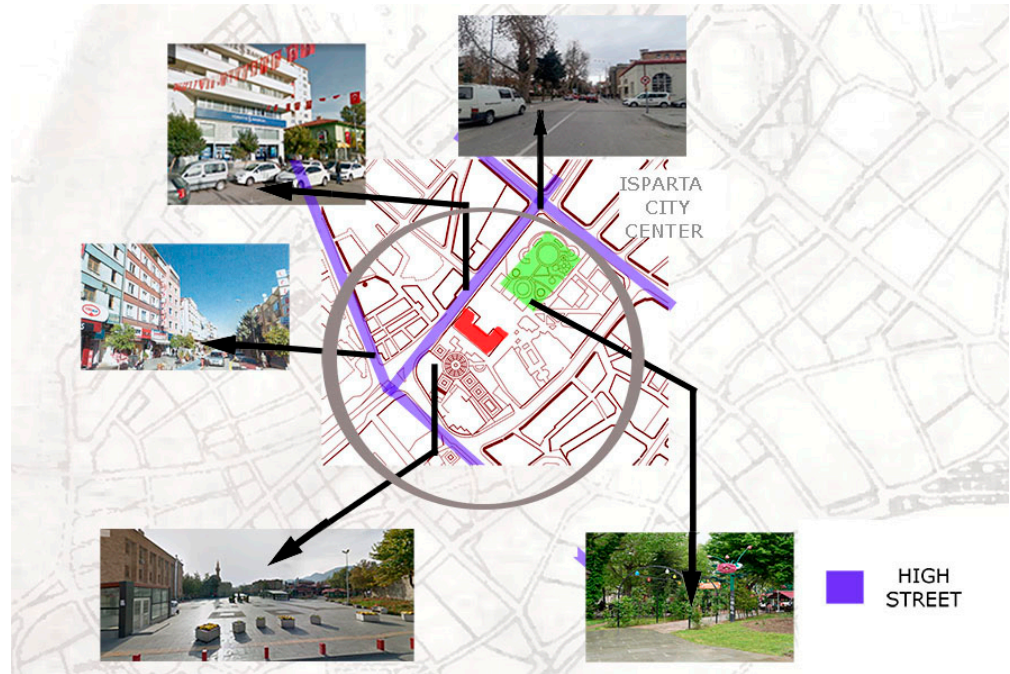
**Figure 21.** Location of the Governor’s Building in the city center on the 1988 zoning plan map (Isparta Municipality Zoning Directorate 2023).



**Figure 22.** Analyzing the Governor’s Building location from the master zoning plan in the past (Anonymous 2001). Image coordinated by Nurcihan Akdağ 1 June 2023.

The building marked in red on the map is the Governor’s Office. The area marked with green is the Atatürk Tea Garden. The main streets around the building and the roads open for use until 1960, closed in later periods, are marked. The first of these is Ceremony Street and its axis, located south of the building. It holds a position in the urban memory regarding the value and meaning of the official parades, ceremonies, and celebrations in the Early Republican Period. The other is the street that almost divides the Kebapçılar Arastasi on the west of the building. This street also has an essential place in the urban memory in terms of providing access to the small-scale commercial shops of the city. On

Mimar Sinan Street, on the northwest of the building, there are old inns and commercial units in the open marketplaces of the shops. The Pavilions are located on the Avenue. The Old High School and Division Headquarters are located on this street. These structures are the buildings that contribute to the formation of the city’s memory.



**Figure 23.** Analyzing the location of today’s Governor’s Building from the master zoning plan (Isparta Municipality Zoning Directorate 2023). Image coordinated by Nurchihan Akdağ 1 June 2023.

The building marked in red on the map is the Governor’s Office. The area marked with green is the Atatürk Tea Garden. The main streets around the building are marked in blue. It is seen that the first of these is Ceremony Street and its axis on the south of the building, and the street dividing the Kebapçılar Arastası on the west has been closed. It is seen that the traditional structure of Mimar Sinan Street has changed and turned into a silhouette with multi-story blocks. It is noted that Pavyonlar Street, located on the east of the building, has undergone radical changes, except for the Old High School and the Division Headquarters building, located on the street where the name was changed to 6 Mart Atatürk Street. As such, the Governorship Building, which is part of the urban memory, differs periodically (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Analyzing the place of the Governorship Building in urban memory on an architectural Scale.

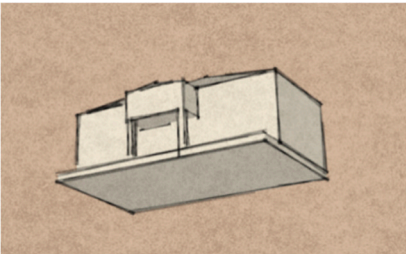

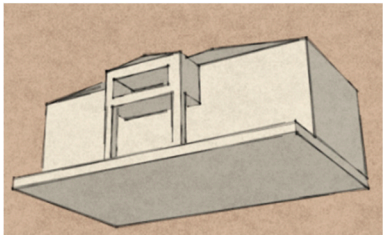
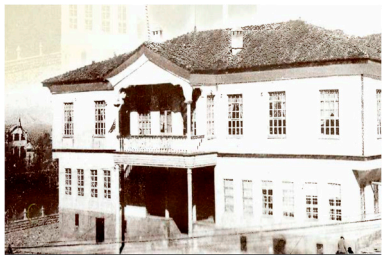
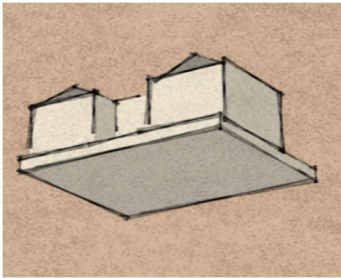

The Period	Form in the Urban Memory of the Period	Formal Differentiation	Facade
1888 (19th century) Traditional Architecture		It is on a traditional housing scale (Akdağ 2017–2023)	



Table 1. Cont.

The Period	Form in the Urban Memory of the Period	Formal Differentiation	Facade
1930 (20th century) Traditional Architecture		 <p>It has the feature of transitioning from a traditional house to an administrative building typology (Akdağ 2017–2023)</p>	 <p>Governorship Building (Anonymous 2001)</p>
2023 (21st century)	Administrative	 <p>It has the characteristics of a public building in both plan and facade planes (Akdağ 2017–2023)</p>	 <p>Governorship Building (Akdağ 2017–2023)</p>


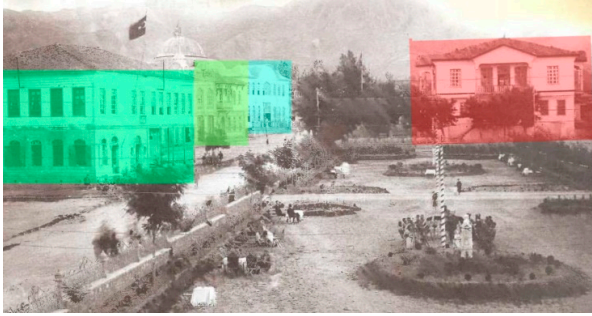

There is a formal difference between the traditional architectural understanding between the 19th and 20th centuries and the Governor's Office, which carries traces of modern architecture in the 21st century. The point that draws attention as the most critical difference is the architectural solutions that affect the perception of the entrance to the buildings.

While it is seen that the scale of the building, which was on a residential scale in the 19th century, has increased in the 21st century, it is understood from the analysis and evaluation results that some of the architectural and urban identity features such as orientation, relationship with the outdoor space, facade, and roof formation elements are maintained. Even though there have been some changes in the architectural periods and the socio-economic and cultural structure of the city, it can be said that the Governorship Building makes contextual transfers to the future and carries traces at the intersection of change/continuity of memory.

**Memory Change/Continuity Reading in Architecture:** The first Government House was built on a residential scale, and the Governor's Office was built on a public building scale. The building entrance and orientation remained the same. While the perception of the entrance is provided by the bay window and the balcony directed outwards in the government mansions, it is seen that the monumental stairs come to the fore in the Governor's Office. Administrative building perception in government mansions is weaker than in the Governor's Building due to the scale, facade understanding, and functionality. It can be said that the essential factor in urban memory is the change in the scale of the building, the phenomenon of privacy, and the public address area.

The importance of the urban environment comes to the fore in how the Governorship Building is included in the urban memory. Table 2 shows the change and transformation of the urban environment from past to present.

**Table 2.** Analyzing the place of the Governorship Building in urban memory on an urban scale.

The Period	Form in the Urban Memory of the Period	Urban Environment	Important Places
1888 (19th century) Administrative		 <p>Governorship Building and Urban Environment (Anonymous 2001)</p>	Ulu Mosque, Inns, Grape Market, and Kutlu Bey Bedesten.
1930 (20th century) Administrative		 <p>Governorship Building and Urban Environment (Anonymous 2001)</p>	Administrative Grand Mosque, Old Town Hall, City Hotel, Grape Market, Kutlu Bey Bedesten, Atatürk Park.
2023 (21st century)	Administrative	 <p>Governorship Building and Urban Environment (Url-4 Isparta Governorship n.d.)</p>	Ulu Mosque, Isparta Hotel, Grape Market, Kutlu Bey Bedesten, and Atatürk Park.

Although functionality, which started to take place frequently in the modern discourses of the twentieth century, has been considered a concept belonging to the mechanical functioning of the building (Forty 2000), it directly impacts the form of urban memory. It is seen that the Governorship Building is functionally located in the urban environment with its administrative structure.

The public area in front of the Governor's Office was functionally used as a recreation and meeting/gathering place. However, the public space at the back of the building has had different functions in the city's memory from the past to the present (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Analyzing the place of the Governorship Building in urban memory within the scope of public space.





The Period	Form in the Urban Memory of the Period	Urban Environment	Public Space
1956 Commercial		 <p data-bbox="708 799 1078 857">Governorship Building and Urban Environment (<a href="#">Anonymous 2001</a>)</p>	<p>Commercial units with various business lines dominate the public area at the back of the building.</p>
1975 Commercial		 <p data-bbox="708 1247 1078 1305">Governorship Building and Urban Environment (<a href="#">News 32 2023</a>)</p>	<p>After 1980, the street in the image was closed to traffic. Later, landscaping was done.</p>
2012	Parking Lot and Recreation	 <p data-bbox="663 1606 1123 1664">Governorship Building and Urban Environment (<a href="#">Isparta Governorship 2023b</a>)</p>	<p>Landscape arrangements were conducted to strengthen the publicity of the square.</p>

Table 3. Cont.

The Period	Form in the Urban Memory of the Period	Urban Environment	Public Space
2023	Commercial and Parking Lot	 <p>Governorship Building and Urban Environment (Google Earth 2023).</p>	Landscape arrangements were conducted to strengthen the publicity of the square.

Analyzing Memory Change/Continuity in the Urban Environment: It is seen that the buildings around the Government House and the Governor's Office almost preserved their functional continuity. For this reason, it has been determined that the commercial activities in the memory of the citizens continue. The change in the understanding of public space is remarkable. While there is a sense of space in the Government House, where the relations between the building and the garden are separated by a garden wall, a public space is seen in the Governor's Office which is intertwined with the public, inviting the public and fostering the feeling of gathering and being together. There have been changes in the grading of the public space with the landscape ratio over time.

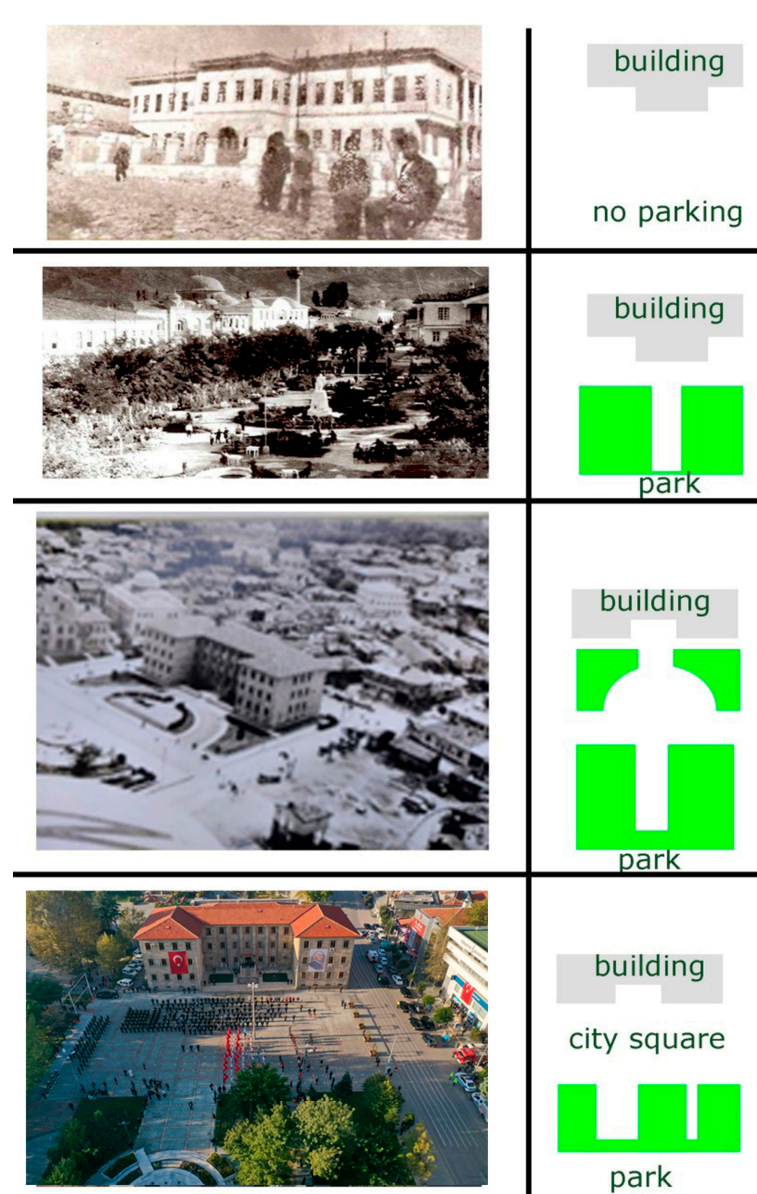
By the twentieth century, monuments became influential in incorporating ideological power into memory as 'symbols and repositories of memories' (Ladd 1997). In this context, the monuments located in the urban environment of the building are shown in Figure 24.



Figure 24. Atatürk Bust in 1958 Government Square: (a) (Anonymous 2001); Atatürk Monument in 2000: (b) (Isparta Governorship 2023a); Atatürk Monument in 2023: (c) (Isparta Governorship 2023a).

There is a traditional Atatürk bust in the area where the practice of commemoration takes place as a concrete monument (in 1947, it was moved in front of the Isparta municipality building, and a new Atatürk monument was built instead). The Atatürk Monument was built for rituals. Atatürk is the founder, commander-in-chief, and first President of the Republic of Türkiye. The direction that the city passed through when Atatürk came to Isparta on 6 March 1930 is also related to this area. Therefore, Atatürk had a say in forming and developing the city's memory. Atatürk is kept alive with the name given to the streets and boulevards of Isparta.

The Atatürk Tea Garden is an example of this situation. The tea garden is the oldest and most notable park built after the proclamation of the Republic. The landscape has changed in the scope of road and landscaping projects from its building date to the present. The first stage was built as a linear walking axis, integrated with the Government House, referring to the public order. Thus, it draws attention to the most critical representation of a structure of the city. It is seen that the effect of this situation has decreased in the landscaping arrangements made later. Figure 25 shows the building–landscape relationship.



**Figure 25.** Building–landscape relationship (Anonymous 2001; Url-3 Isparta Governorship n.d.). Image coordinated by Nurcihan Akdağ 20 May 2023.

There is also a statue of Türkiye’s ninth President Süleyman Demirel, statues of various figures, a clock tower, and ornamental pools in Kaymaklı Square, which is associated with the square at the back of the building. Benches are placed at points where the square can be viewed. A water element is also located in the southern part of the square and is used as a recreation and park area that may be of interest to citizens. There is median greening and afforestation around the axis of the building in the west direction towards Hospital Street.

### *The Place of Isparta Government House in Social Life*

With the proclamation of the Republic, cities became a national ‘theatre of memory’ (Samuel 1998) where new cultural and political symbolism was staged. The existence of public spaces open to everyone comes to the fore in the planning of the modern city. These spaces, seen as the center of contemporary society, are analyzed as a common ground that connects community, where functional and ritual activities that connect people to society occur (Carr et al. 1992).

Until the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the city of Isparta, which had a small-scale urban formation and a structure where agricultural activities were at the forefront, showed urban development. With reconstruction activities, important buildings were built in the city center. With the proclamation of the Republic, it came to the fore to organize a large square in front of the Government House for official ceremonies to be celebrated there with great enthusiasm and excitement (Isparta Zoning Plan Report 1943). This square has been a center of attraction since its arrangement. It hosts official and religious holidays, ceremonies, and celebrations of the City of Isparta (Figure 26).



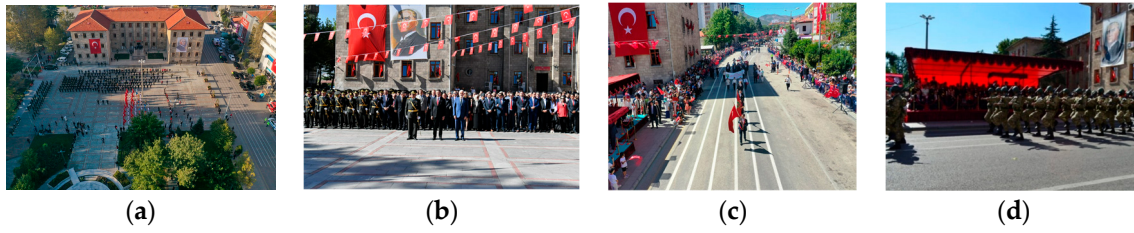
**Figure 26.** Ceremony and celebration at the Government House: (a) (Isparta Provincial Yearbook 1983); a car cortege of state officials: (b) (Anonymous 2001); a ceremony in the park in 1936: (c) (Anonymous 2001).

Government offices and the Governor’s Office play an essential role in the city’s memory and social dynamics as they are intertwined with a public square (Figure 27).



**Figure 27.** Governor’s Building public space in 1960 (Anonymous 2001).

The former ‘Government Square’, now called ‘July 15 Democracy Square’, is where political, religious, and commercial activities are presented to the public. It has a spatial structure that has corresponded to social life without interruption for the last 135 years, including being where traditional rituals are held, where walking tours are organized, and where Isparta’s important Cherry Feast, Rose, and Carpet Festivals take place (Figure 28) (Url-3, Url-5).



**Figure 28.** Ceremony and celebration at the Government House nowadays: (a) ([Url-3 Isparta Governorship n.d.](#)); ceremony and celebration at the Government House: (b) ([Isparta Governorship 2023a](#)); ceremony and celebration at the Government House: (c) ([Isparta Governorship 2023a](#)); ceremony and celebration at the Government House: (d) ([Url-5 Isparta News 32 n.d.](#)).

Concerning the structure that best embodies the spirit of social solidarity, information obtained during the personal interview with Attorney Gngr akmakı on 23 March 2011 is as follows: ‘ The Government House was a wooden building. All of a sudden, it burned down. The judge would hold a hearing; title deeds and documents were swimming in fire waters! Officers didn’t have a chair to sit on! For this reason, it was necessary to build a new Government Office immediately without looking for a place.’ The new Government House was built without receiving any subsidy from the state by bringing stone from the Dereboğazı road and cutting half of the poplars in the gardens from İlavus (Yakaren) village and a few more poplar-growing villages, saying, ‘‘We will construct a building for the public’’. That way, the building was built at minimal cost. The present building was built by giving specific shapes to the Kvke stones. Kvke is the stone taken from the Isparta Glck crater lake lava years ago. There are more on the Derebogazi road. It is soft when shaving and shaping. Interestingly, snow hardens as it falls on it ([elebi 2011](#)). According to akmakı, who gave information about the construction process of the Governor’s Office (Figure 6), the building is an example of unity and solidarity of the people. It has been with the people for about 85 years and is home to the customs and traditions of people in Isparta.

According to Nora, memory also means customs and habits and covers the area from consciousness to semi-consciousness ([Nora 1984, 1989](#)). In this context, the people of Isparta are loyal to their religious customs and traditions. On blessed days, they go to neighborhood mosques and sell oil lamps in city centers. Shopkeepers in places called ‘‘Arasta’’ come together and make semolina halvah and distribute it on the streets for charity ([Isparta Provincial Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2023a](#)). Table 4 shows some of the traditions associated with the square, which is almost a pioneer in keeping traditions alive.

Analyzing Memory Change/Continuity in Social Life Rituals: Since the Government Houses and the Governor’s Office are in the historical surroundings of the city, many social rituals, traditions, walking routes, wreath laying, commemorations, and regional celebrations and religious celebrations are held here, which have continued from the past to the present. It is understood that there are changes in some respects, such as technology, the width of roads, urban equipment, landscaping, and building heights, in the surroundings, although the place of these rituals has become entrenched in the memory of citizens.

It is seen that social practices and spatial formation feed each other. Even though the transformation that took place with the city’s dynamics was interrupted over time (with the disappearance of the Government House), it continues its meaning and value with the spatial practices that carry the urban memory. The Governor’s Office, included in the study, is the carrier of urban memory. It continues to provide opportunities for social practices that maintain memory.

**Table 4.** Some traditions in social life.







Title 1	Title 2
	<p>'Hot Distribution Tradition' is depicted in miniature. One of these is the distribution of heat (the local pronunciation of the word hot), which is included in the traditions of charity and expresses the people's culture of cooperation and solidarity (Tekin 2020). The Great Mosque, built in 1904 as a masonry/rockwork and multi-domed mosque like Hagia Sophia, is in close contact with the City Square. In our culture, the functionality of mosques and holy places is a place of worship, as well as the application area of some traditions and customs that have a spiritual meaning.</p>
<p>Ulu Mosque Kutlubey and the tradition of distributing hot meal (Tekin 2020)</p>	
	<p>The tradition of praying for rain is also common in the city in cases where it rains for a short time and there are many droughts. It is a set of practices generally consisting of prayer, cooking, and eating a collective meal (Esen 2020). The public square where these gatherings are most intense is the old Government Square.</p>
<p>Rain prayer miniature (Esen 2020)</p>	
	<p>It is famous in traditional weddings in Isparta that preparations begin one week and ten days before the wedding. Cooks are hired if the wedding ceremony includes dinner (Alav 2020). Wedding ceremonies from past to present continue to feature car convoys at the Government House and its surroundings (in the city center).</p>
<p>Wedding ceremony miniature (Alav 2020, p. 15)</p>	
	<p>It is famous for traditional weddings in Isparta that preparations begin one week and ten days before the wedding. Cooks are hired if the wedding ceremony includes dinner (Alav 2020). Wedding ceremonies from past to present continue to feature with car convoys at the Government House and its surroundings (in the city center).</p>
<p>Ramadan feast miniature (Alav 2020, p. 29)</p>	



Table 4. Cont.

Title 1	Title 2
	<p>Arasta Bazaars and bazaars, which have traditional business lines in Isparta, are held in the Government Office and its surroundings (in the city center).</p>
	
<p>Carpet, tin miniature (Ayaz 2020)</p>	
<p>Copper miniature (Küçüköner 2020)</p>	

## 5. Conclusions

Due to the rapid spread of industrialization and knowledge acquisition, the development of technology has been a turning point for humanity. The change in public structures and their needs are parallel with the change and transformation of cities. Although the functional roles of public buildings in the city's memory are similar from past to present, it is striking that there are significant differences in architectural identities.

The recollection of the past largely depends on the present's cultural frameworks. One of the study's essential results is that private ritual remembrance acts are directly related to the public and political context. What is critical for urban memory is not abolishing old and national memories but rethinking and reconstructing them. The structures examined here should be seen as public heritage. The value and meaning of structurally existing or lost structures should be protected urgently because rapidly changing cities can cause the memory to be erased.

Apart from being an administrative center, the Isparta Governor's Office is in a public space where cultural rituals are held. Moreover, it stands out as an activity space where social relations occur within daily life practices and is in close proximity to the City Center where economic activities occur. The Governor's Office, which is close to Kaymakkapı Square, defined as the heart of the city, has affected urban memory with its architectural identity and socio-cultural meaning in social life from when it was built to the present day.

The area where the building is located is a spatial area where socio-cultural life is alive. The building is in contact with many urban elements where social and cultural relations are experienced. The places where people mingle and socialize together are Atatürk Park, the historical covered bazaar, the historical Dalboyunoğlu Bath, the Great Mosque, and the Historical Grape Bazaar. Moreover, today's 'July 15 Democracy Square', once called 'Government Square', is a public space and meeting place (Nora 1984, 2006) that directly shapes urban memory.

Information on the old Government House is insufficient. The destruction of buildings bearing traces of the past and showing cultural heritage characteristics due to natural reasons, their inability to keep up with today's conditions, or the inadequacy of resources makes it difficult to reveal the historical traces of the structures. The demolition of the old Government House paved the way for urban memory to be transformed. With the destruction of the old Government House and the construction of the new Governor's Office, the building has retained its functional aspect. Although the building has become a social space that serves the public better, the Governor's Office is called the Government

House in memory of the citizens. The failure to preserve the Government House, which could have contributed to the historical aspect of the city, shows that it is involved in a memory process that is interrupted in terms of addressing not only a part of the society but also the whole society.

In conclusion, the Governor's Office directly affects the city's memory with its urban environment. The architecture of the building, which is the work of the Early Republic and has modern traces, has the feature of monumentality. Its place in the city's memory is continuous with its relationship with the public square and park. The failure to protect and preserve the Government Houses built in the 19th and 20th centuries shows that these places entered the cycle of extinction in urban memory.

While preserving its place and function, this study—which deals with what a building that is seen to have undergone change and transformation in its architectural environment means to the citizens of the city and presents to the city, and its situation in the city's memory—gives significant intellectual results in terms of ensuring that the buildings enter the cycle of being remembered and raises awareness of the loss of urban memory traces in the city center. The study evaluated the place of the Governor's Office in urban memory using Pierre Nora's analyses (Nora 1984, 2006). These evaluations are included in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Evaluation chart.

According to Nora, memory is not a closed repertoire; because 'someone's memory is everyone's memory', it is in a state of constant formation and renewal.	In this respect, it is a matter of fact that the city's memory will be renewed and host different formations with the changing parameters of the city from today onwards.
Urban memory elements are where memory is fermented but constitutes the source of tradition.	The Governor's Office is also a representation of the social tradition. The city, with its square and street arrangements that represent the modernism of the Turkish Republic, is an area where memory is intensely fed.
According to Nora, commemoration ceremonies realized through rituals are the biggest obstacle in the face of history waiting to destroy things that are not mentioned.	The Governor's Building is a public place where memorial ceremonies take place. For this reason, it maintains its meaning and value from the first year it was built.
Memory emerges especially as the feeling of belonging to the nation becomes stronger.	The feature of belonging to the nation is strengthened through ceremonies, holidays, and various celebrations. Since the first day of its establishment, the Governorship Building has been a national culture and it has taken an active role in keeping local values alive.
According to Nora, all physical and mental areas, such as museums, archives, cemeteries, monuments, religious buildings, important immovable cultural assets, squares, streets, and parks, contribute to the clarification of urban memory.	Considering its structural and environmental condition, the Governor's Office has essential memory elements.
According to Nora, only when France deciphers its memory will it be able to prepare a future for itself.	In this context, it is noteworthy to reveal memory elements that we cannot define and have no knowledge about. It is foreseen that the subject of the former Government Houses will provide a bridge between the past and the future.
According to Nora, monumental spaces take the meanings they carry from their structure. Their purposes remain the same even if they are moved to another place.	An example can be given to moving the Atatürk Bust, built in 1931, from the Old Government Square to the present-day Isparta Municipality Building. Even if this bust was moved, its meaning and value would not change.
According to Nora, it is only possible to examine some of the memory sites of France. For a memory space to exist, the historian must have the power to "make it a memory space".	Drawing attention to the symbolic representations of the Isparta Governor's Office, its readability as a place where the community meets, feels belonging, and remembers its past is revealed within the scope of the study.
According to Nora, the political power has a say in the memory of the society by using its own reminder figures.	The Governorship Building and Government Mansions also have a place in society's memory as political and administrative places.
According to Nora, memory sites are an endless list of facts that a society may need to remember in the future.	The administrative structures discussed within the scope of the study were examined with the determined study methodology. These structures are just a few of the structures that society may need to remember in the future. The study aimed to raise awareness of the loss of traces of urban memory.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; methodology, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; software, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; validation, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; formal analysis, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; investigation, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; resources, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; data curation, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; writing—original draft preparation, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; writing—review and editing, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; visualization, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; supervision, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; project administration, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; funding acquisition, N.A. and Ş.G.B.; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Data Availability Statement:** Complies with confidentiality and ethical rules. Published in MDPI journals to share their research data.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Balcony speeches are used in all countries to address the nation or other nations. Although the first traces of it were seen in the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia, it is known that balcony speeches were made in America in earlier times. Ahmet Akgül (2020) wrote: “Sultan II. According to what Cemalettin Efendi, one of the Shaykh al-Islams of the Abdulhamid period, told in his memoir, when subjects, soldiers, or party members were disturbed by some issues, they would always come in front of the palace and wait for the Sultan to calm them down with a speech from the balcony.” (Çıragöz and Acar 2021).
- <sup>2</sup> Stone Kovke is a material found in Isparta and its surroundings which is in a mud state when first removed, is shaped by pouring the mud into molds, is hardened and petrified after drying, and then used in buildings. It was used to construct old churches such as Aya Yorgi Church and some minarets in Isparta.
- <sup>3</sup> Podio motif is a design model created to meet users with a high staircase at the entrance of the building.
- <sup>4</sup> Bedesten is a covered Turkish bazaar.
- <sup>5</sup> Arasta is where kebab shops are located.

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