

Towards a professional commissioning practice

An assessment of recent public design competition culture in the Netherlands

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Introduction

Unlike some of its neighboring countries, the Netherlands do not have a strong tradition in public design contests. As of old, this kind of procedures are unpopular among public clients. Persistent prejudices prevail. Design contests are expensive, consume a lot of time and their outcome is uncertain (Spreiregen 1979). The few Dutch public design contests that have been organized in the past years are mainly used for image reasons and incidentally to generate ideas or just 'to do something different'. These procedures are rarely used for contract allocation. Public clients prefer to solicit bids from a select group of preferred architects. The implementation of the European Public Procurement Directives (Directive 2004/17/EG and 2004/18/EG) had a profound impact on Dutch design competition culture. Suddenly, open competition was compulsory for public contracts with a value above the European thresholds. Confronted with this legal obligation, Dutch public clients have resorted to European (predominantly restricted) tender procedures to award their contracts for design services (SESAM).

Most architects resent recent design competition culture in the Netherlands. Especially the European Procurement Directives, or – to be more precise – their unnecessary strict interpretation by Dutch awarding authorities, in the past years have given way to a seemingly endless stream of criticisms (Kroese et al. 2008; Van der Pol et al. 2009; Geertse et al. 2010; Stegmeijer 2010). These complaints are not confined to the architectural sector (Ruiter 2009). Besides overt aggravated requirements, criteria and contract terms and mounting transaction costs, architects complain about lacking properties, usually attributed to 'classic' design contests: peer review and holistic, qualitative review methods. It must be pointed out that these issues are not a specific Dutch phenomenon; everywhere in Europe the formal straightjacket of EU procurement causes similar problems (Geertse et al. 2010: 50-59). However, those who think architects prefer design contests are wrong. They are not enthusiastic about this kind of selection procedures because of the slim chances of winning and the considerable transaction costs involved. They resent the lack of commitment surrounding most design contests. Clients ask a lot, but generally offer little in return. The bulk of the Dutch design contests concern so-called 'ideas competitions' in which architects are asked to enter 'free designs'; they receive no remuneration for design costs, prize money is negligible and they have to transfer all intellectual property (Pöll 2013; Kempe 2013). Also abroad, these ideas competitions are a serious concern to architects (Geertse 2011). Despite the dominant sentiments towards design contests in the Netherlands, they are actually booming. The *Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden of Architectuur Lokaal* (hereafter the *Steunpunt*) reported a spectacular increase(+74%) of design contests in 2012 (Steunpunt 2013).

This paper surveys recent Dutch competition culture within the architectural sector. This paper focuses on commissions by public clients in the period 2006-2013. It will sketch a geography of Dutch competition culture through an empirical assessment of Dutch competition practice, including

comparisons to practice abroad, and explore the ambiguous relation between public tender procedures and design competitions. Although often perceived as opposites, these procedures actually have a lot in common and are growing closer together.

A geography of Dutch design competition culture

Mapping design competition culture is far from easy. There is no central registration of design competitions (tenders for architecture and design contests) in the Netherlands, nor in its neighboring countries. *Tenders electronic daily* (TED) at ted.europa.eu, the electronic supplement to the *Official Journal of the European Union*, is a valuable resource for selection procedures resorting under the European Public Procurement Directives, but as a repository it has its shortcomings. Firstly, it serves as a repository for recent procedures. It does not store older contract and award notices. Queries by common procurement vocabulary (CPV) codes, is the easiest way to interrogate TED, but contract notices do not always have all the correct CPV codes – sometimes the wrong CPV codes are applied and in the case of integrated contracts the CPV code for design services is often missing – and the project description often does not clearly describe whether the (integrated) contract entails design services or not. National public procurement portals have similar disadvantages. Moreover, the infrastructure of these national portals is not always transparent. In the Netherlands we have the national public procurement portal *TenderNed* at www.tenderned.nl. The new Dutch Public Procurement Act (April 2013) compels Dutch awarding authorities to publish all their national and European contract notices on *TenderNed*. Other countries, like for example the UK, do not have a central portal and do not have a clue how many national portals they actually have (Winston 2013). In the case of design contests, registration is even more diffuse.

For the Netherlands, the online database of the *Steunpunt* is the best available resource to map the geography of Dutch design completion culture. This organization has collected information about all public procurement procedures for architectural commissions and all design competitions since July 2005, when the national decrees for implementation of the European Public Procurement Directives were formally adopted. The *Steunpunt* not only registers notices for procedures, but also monitors the proceedings of these procedures. Thus the *Steunpunt* offers unique information about design competition culture in the Netherlands. Of course we have to account for the methodology used by the *Steunpunt* for data gathering. Firstly, It gathers data manually to evade the trappings of missing and wrong CPV codes and poor project descriptions. Of course, manual work will result in an error margin, but this margin is not specified. Secondly, the *Steunpunt* focuses on what it calls ‘architectural commissions’. It defines ‘architectural commission’ as a commission or contract, including ‘a full design component’. An architectural commission must include the production of a design, not just the detailing or engineering of an available design. Finally, the *Steunpunt* is dependent on the availability of documentation and information. Its database gives a good overview of publicly announced design competitions (tenders and contests), but this database does not give a lot of information about invited and private design competitions, although this invisible ‘market’ must constitute the majority of the Dutch design competitions.

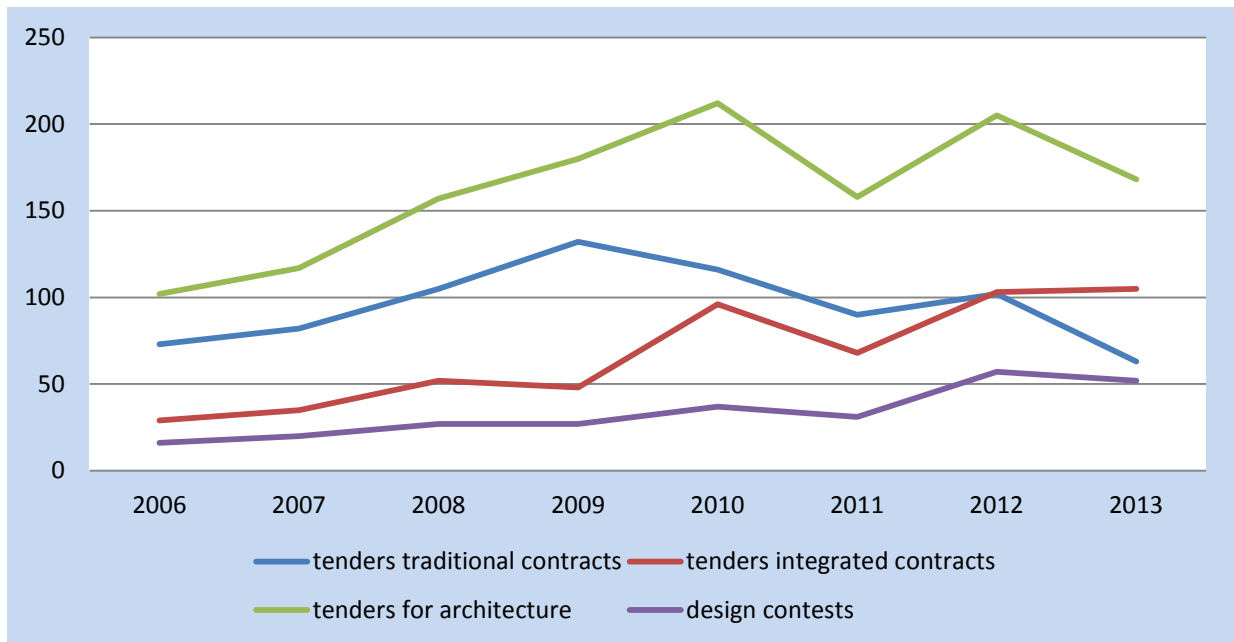
When we turn to the database of the *Steunpunt* (graph 1), it immediately becomes clear that recent public design competition culture in the Netherlands is dominated by (European) tender procedures. These graphics need some explaining. Although, just like the rest of Europe, the Netherlands have been severely hit by the economic crisis and its consequences from 2008/2009 onwards, the number of procurement procedures for architecture initially continues to grow, while the number of contracts available in this period actually substantially decreases. This deviation is

primarily caused by improved compliance with the European Public Procurement Directives by decentralized awarding authorities (Idzenga et al. 2010; Van Dieten et al. 2012). First in 2011 improved compliance can no longer compensate the general economic downpour in the building industry. The year 2012 brings a short recovery, but 2013 brings a continuance of the downhill trajectory. This downward trajectory is being reinforced by the new Public Procurement Act, which provides compulsory guidelines with regard to the proportionality (requirements, transaction costs et cetera) of tender procedures. In the wake compulsory European tenders, many public clients used so-called 'nation tenders', procedures that echo European tender procedures, for contracts with a value beneath the European thresholds. Often these national tenders were disproportionate, if one compares the contract values with the requirements and transaction costs involved. Under the new Public Procurement Act national tenders for design services have more or less evaporated. Public clients use invited tenders instead, which are not registered by the *Steunpunt*.

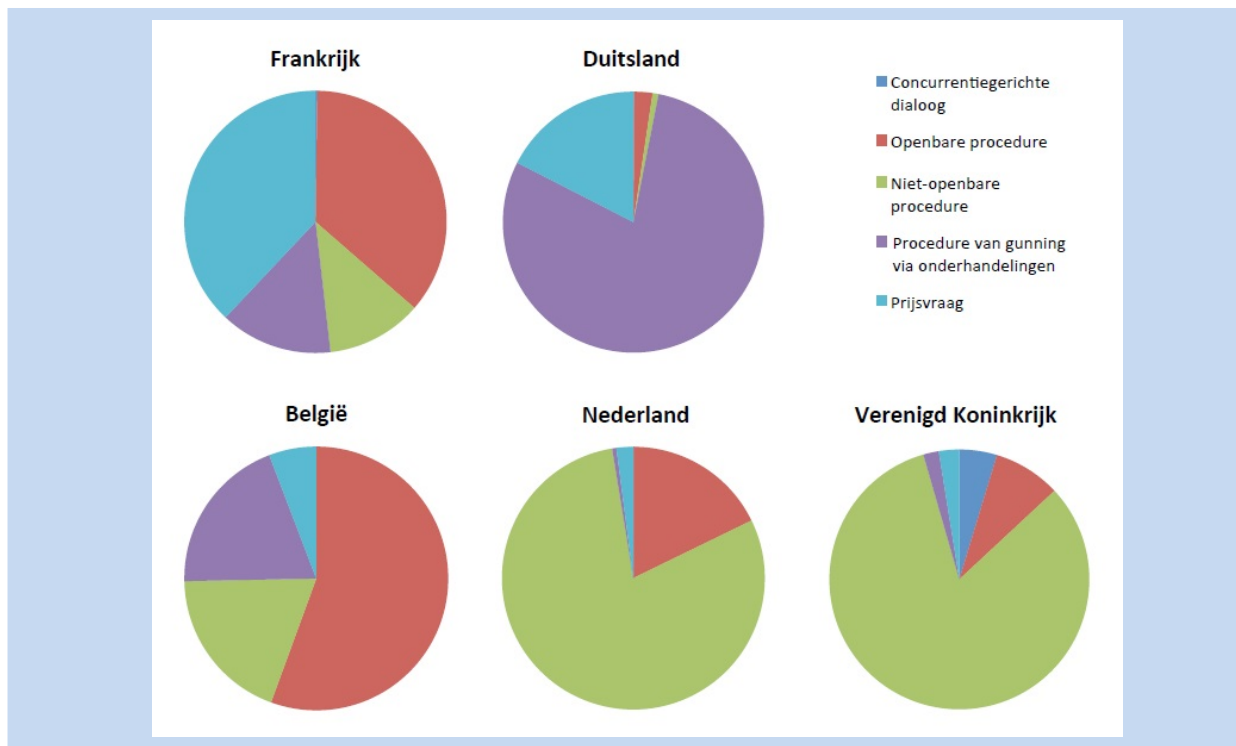
Graph 1 also clearly reveals an orientation towards integrated contracting in the Netherlands. Integrated contracting is official State policy and is being actively promoted among decentralized awarding authorities, both by the State and protagonists of the construction industry. Especially the year 2010 witnesses a significant upsurge of integrated contracts at the expense of the –then still dominant – traditional contracts. In 2012 integrated contracting matches traditional contracting, while in 2013 the former has surpassed the latter. Throughout the period 2006-2013 the number of design contests in the Netherlands witnesses a steady increase, but their number pales compared to the number of tenders.

Dutch awarding authorities mainly use the restricted tender procedure to award architectural commissions resorting under the European Public Procurement Directives (graph 2). With regard to public procurement, Dutch design competition culture is primarily informed by the practice in the UK. We roughly use the same procedures and we have also borrowed the concept of integrated contracting from the Anglo-Saxon world. This design competition culture differs from that in other European countries. In France, public clients mainly use design contests and open tender procedures; in Germany, public clients mainly resort to negotiation procedures, followed by design contests. It must be pointed out that these countries have national legislation with regard to public design competition culture. Design contests are compulsory for prestigious public buildings. In Belgium, the open tender procedure dominates public design competition culture. However, we must account for the fact that TED statistics provide a misleading overview for the Belgian context. The share of design contests is larger. The 'open calls' organized by the Flemish Chief Architect are registered as single contests, while an open call actually is a clustered notice of several design contests (one open call can cover 30+ design contests). These foreign alternative procedures are generally dismissed by Dutch awarding authorities as too alien, too cumbersome and/or too expensive (Geertse, Jansen & Talman 2012).

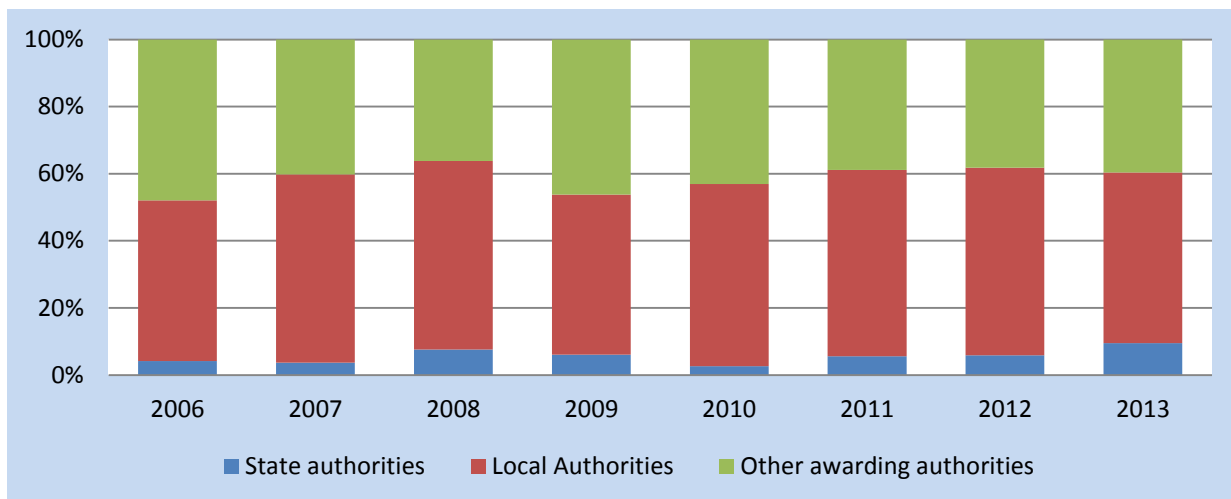
The database of the *Steunpunt* enables identification of the clients behind Dutch design competitions (graphs 3 and 4). Unsurprisingly, tender procedures are predominantly organized by organizations that are regarded as 'awarding authority' under the European Public Procurement Directives (governmental agencies and institutions controlled or predominantly financed by the government). Tender procedures are predominantly organized by local authorities (municipalities and provinces), followed by 'other awarding authorities'. This latter category mainly concerns school boards and universities and, to a lesser extent, special services providers in the water, energy, infrastructure and postal services sectors (sectors covered by Directive 17/2004/EG). In the case of



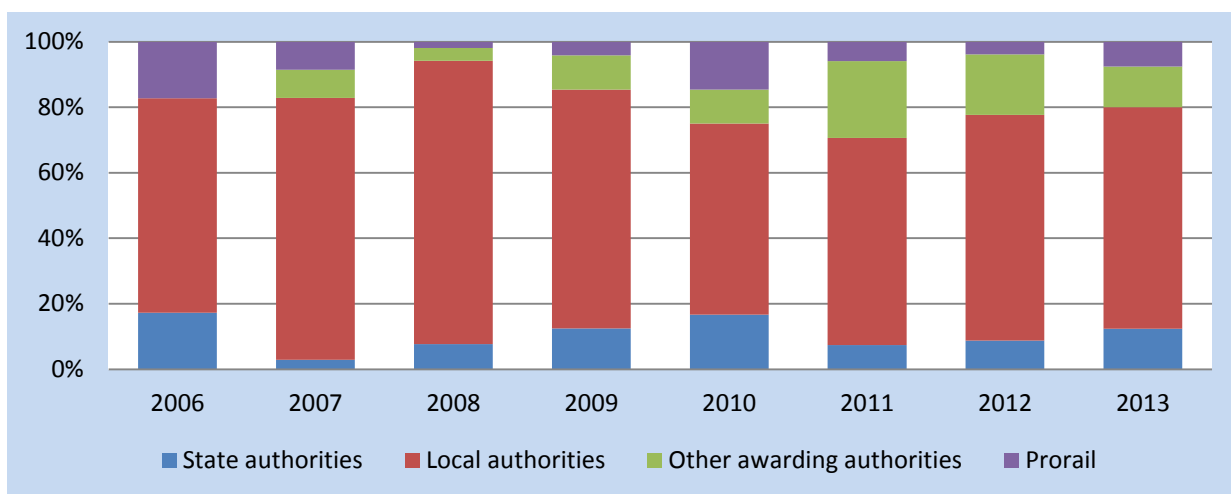
Graph 1: Tender procedures for architecture (traditional design services contracts and integrated contracts including design services) and design contests in the Netherlands in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



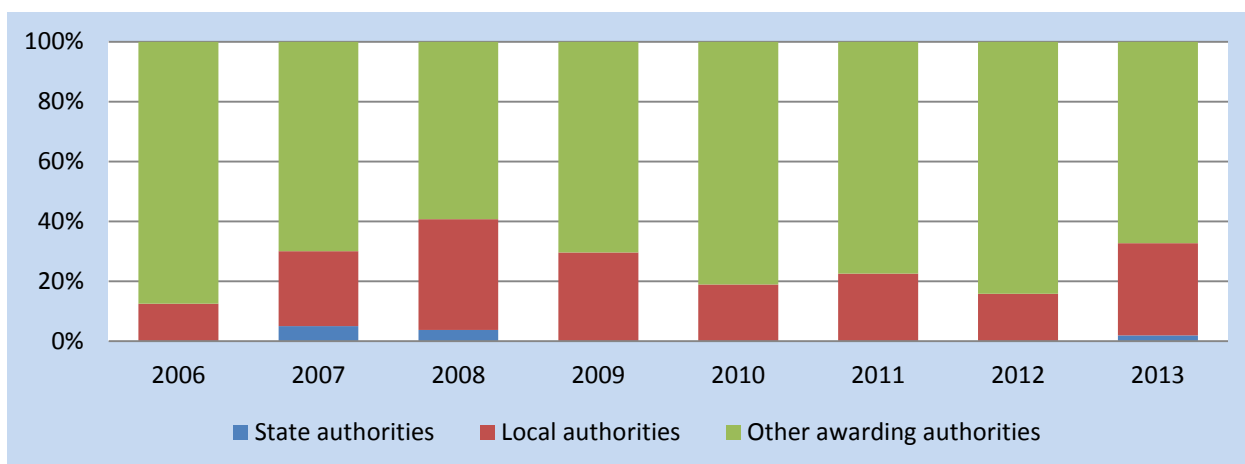
Graph 2: EU procurement of architectural design services in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, based on contract notices published in OJEU (November 2008-November 2011) with CPV-code for design services. Light blue= desing contest, purple= negotiation procedure, green= restricted tender procedure, red= open tender procedure, dark blue= competitive dialogue. Source: Geertse, Jansen & Talman (2012).



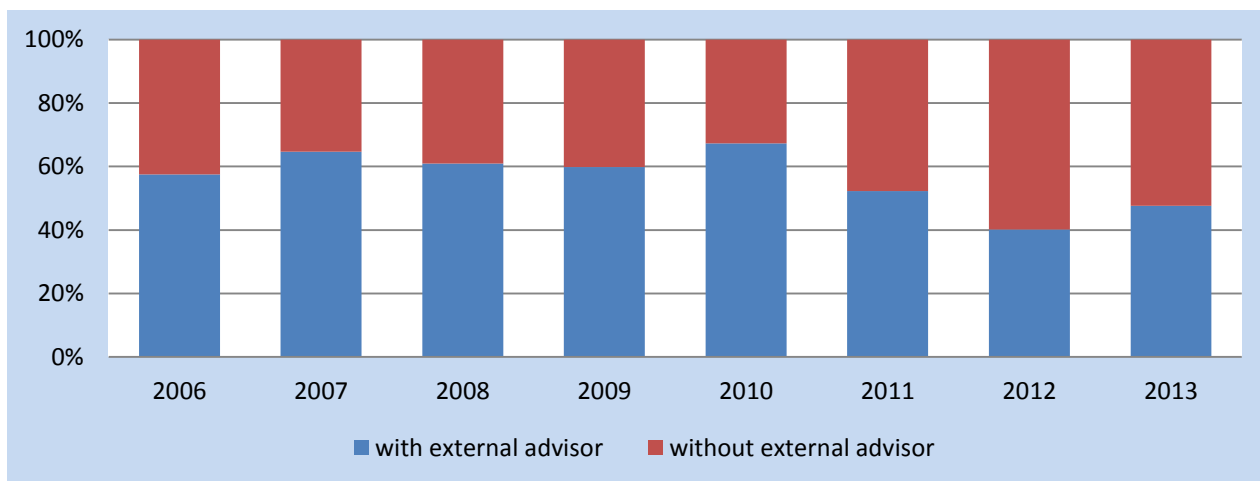
Graph 3: public clients behind tender procedures for traditional design services contracts in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



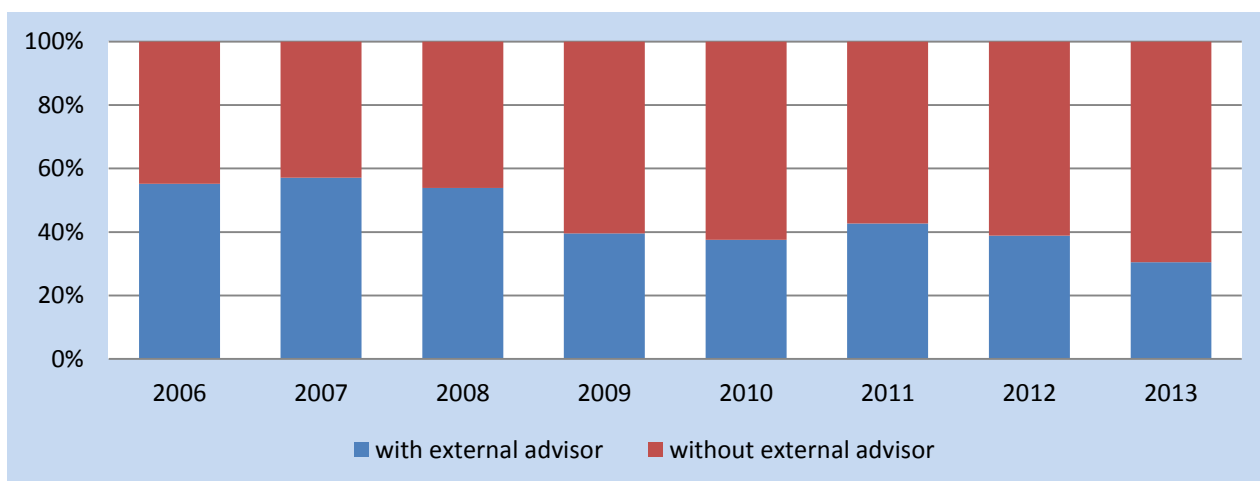
Graph 4: public clients behind tender procedures for integrated contracts, including design services, in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



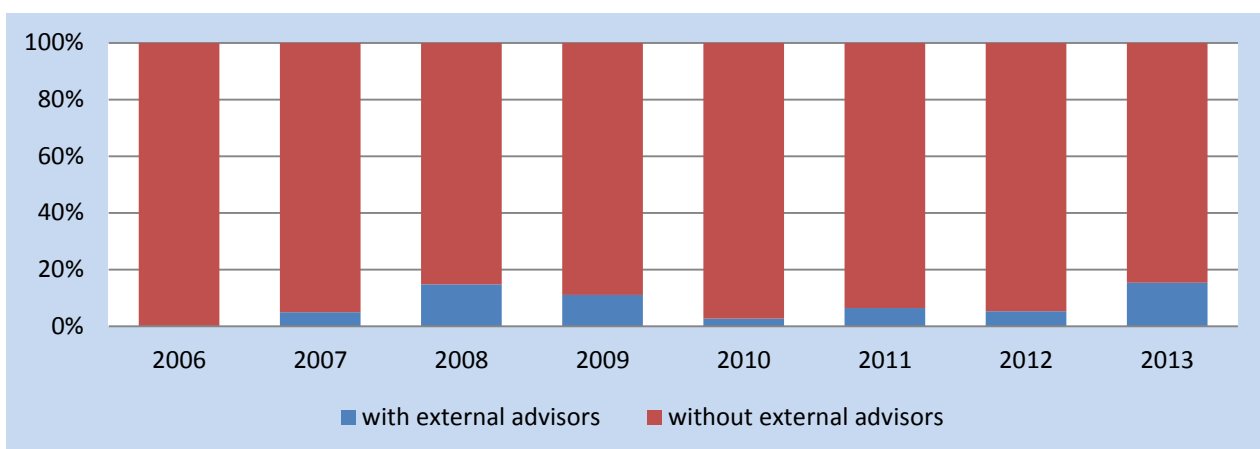
Graph 5: clients behind design contests in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



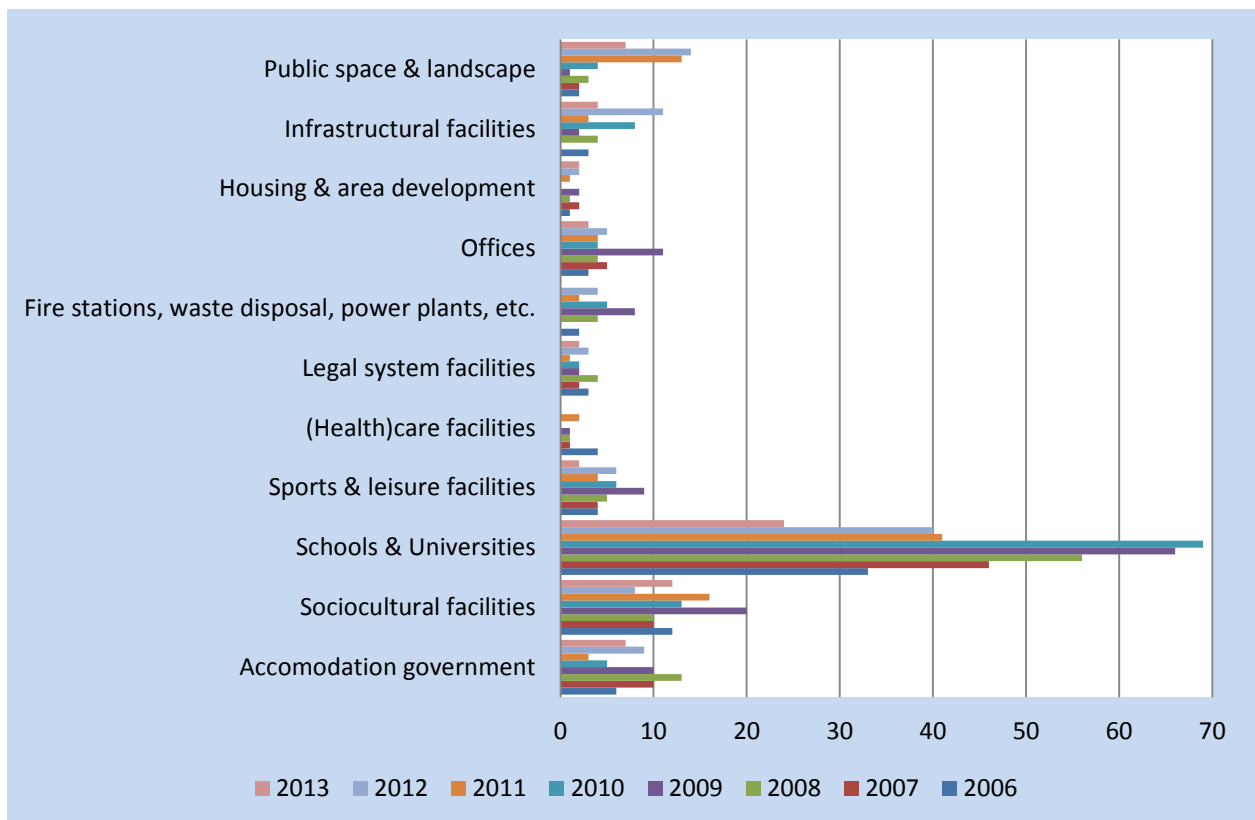
Graph 6: External advisors responsible for tender procedures for traditional design services contracts in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



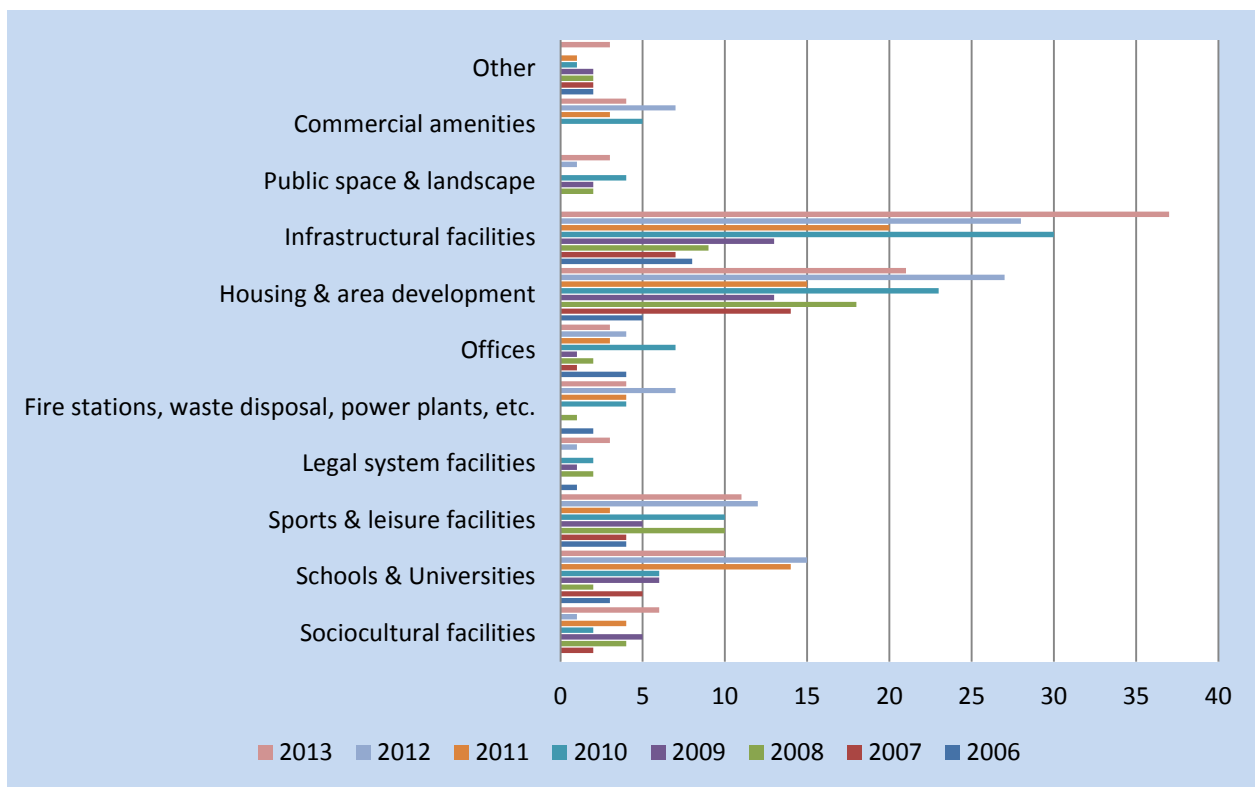
Graph 7: External advisors responsible for tender procedures for integrated contracts, including design services, in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



Graph 8: External advisors responsible for design contests in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



Graph 9: Taxonomy of commissions for tenders of traditional contracts in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM



Graph 10: Taxonomy of commissions for tenders of integrated contracts in the period 2006-2013 (the figures for 2013 exclude December 2013). Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM

integrated contracting, Prorail, the Dutch railway network operator, deserves explicit mentioning. These awarding authorities include a lot of 'incidental' public clients. A school director only incidentally solicits design services for a new school building. The same goes for a small municipality that wants to commission a new town hall. These inexperienced awarding authorities make use of external advisors to organize their procurement procedures (graphs 5 and 6). These advisors have a big impact on Dutch design competition culture. They are responsible for about 60% of the tenders for traditional contracts and 40% of the tenders for integrated contracts, although at the moment their share is decreasing under the influence of the professionalization of governmental purchasing departments.

Design contests are organized by different clients than public procurement procedures (graph 5). In this category local authorities are not the dominant client. Here 'other awarding authorities' does not refer to schools, universities and special sector providers, but predominantly to cultural and professional institutions. Dominant cultural institutions include organizations such as EUROPLAN, the *Stimuleringsfonds voor Architectuur*, architecture centers and the Netherlands Architecture Institute. Professional institutions include the Royal Institute of Dutch Architects and its local branches. These clients only incidentally use external advisors to organize their design contest. Most of them use the standard brief of *KOMPAS bij Prijsvragen en Meervoudige Opdrachten* (Van Campen & Hendrikse 1997) developed by *Architectuur Lokaal*. The majority of these contests concern so-called 'ideas competitions' which represent only marginal financial interests, so the need for a formal, legally airtight procedure (the general rule in Dutch public procurement) is generally considered negligible.

A closer look at the commissions tendered by public clients learns that traditional and integrated contracts are used for all kinds of building projects (graphs 9 and 10). Nevertheless, some preferences are clearly identifiable. Design services for educational buildings and representative public buildings (town halls, cultural buildings and social facilities) are predominantly tendered as traditional contracts. On the other hand, design services for housing and area development, infrastructural projects and commercial facilities (retail and food service industry) are predominantly tendered as integrated contract. It is more difficult to describe a taxonomy of commissions for Dutch design contests. Unlike procurement procedures in which public clients solicit specific design solutions that meet a detailed program of requirements, a lot of design competitions do not stipulate specific design solutions. They often stimulate 'out of the box' solutions. Moreover, design contests cover a far broader spectrum of assignments. Nevertheless, generally speaking we can discern definite anchor points in public space, cultural facilities and housing in the corpus of Dutch design competition briefs (SESAM).

The past years a lot has been said about the architects competing in Dutch design competitions. Although some architects emphasize the fruits of European public procurement, that is the accessibility of public contracts to all eligible market operators (Geertse, Jansen & Talman 2011: 8-9), most architects lament compulsory European tender procedures. They complain European public procurement has achieved the very opposite of a level playing field. Most tender procedures assess the track record of eligible architects. As a consequence, tendered design services contracts are usually awarded to settled, larger architectural firms. The *Steunpunt* has refuted popular belief that a successful elite of large architectural firms is responsible for an ever-growing number of awards. By means of annual diversity ratios (number of architectural firms that have secured an award through public procurement / number of public procurement procedures pro year) it has demonstrated that public contracts are actually awarded to an expanding population of architectural

firms (Geertse, Jansen & Talman 2010). Still, there is no denying that large architectural firms and specialized architectural firms get most tendered public contracts. The new Dutch Public Procurement Act intends to change this situation. Accessibility to public contracts by SMEs is one of the spearheads of this new legislation, although so far it has effected little change in European public procurement procedures. But of course, local SMEs have sufficient acquisition opportunities regarding public contracts beneath the European thresholds. The Public Procurement Act has had the effect that national tenders dissolve. Public clients increasingly turn to so-called regional tenders to offer opportunities for local firms and local employment for smaller commissions (Geertse and Talman 2013). Although the European public procurement rules aim to create an open European market and stimulate cross-border trade, the number of tendered Dutch public contracts that are awarded to foreign firms is negligible (SESAM). This observation is consistent with reports on cross-border procurement commissioned by the European Commission (Ramboll & HTW Chur 2011).

Dutch design contests attract a different population of contestants. Design contests especially hold appeal for start-ups and SMEs and young architects that do not have their own firm yet. The diversity among winners is much bigger than in (EU) procurement. Although also in Dutch design contests Dutch winners dominate, these procedures relatively produce more foreign winners than Dutch public procurement (database of the *Steunpunt*).

‘Communicating vessels’

Although to the uninformed beholder public procurement and design contests must represent different, rigidly separated worlds. One might say that this division reflects the duality that is inherent to the architectural profession as an applied art. Architecture is both an autonomous art and an economic service to clients (Geertse 2011). Public procurement focuses on the economic dimension of architecture. Architectural design is perceived as an economic service to be purchased. Design contests on the other hand emphasize the cultural potency of architectural design. They rely on design agency to produce creative and innovative solutions. However, the separation between public procurement culture and design contest culture is not as absolute as one might expect.

Design contest principles	Public procurement principles
1. Plan	1. Partner
2. Assignment	2. Contract allocation
3. Artist	3. Market operator
4. Object focus	4. Process focus
5. Consultation	5. Acquisition
6. possible design solution	6. best and final offer
7. design contest regulations	7. tender procedures
8. Assessment by jury (peer review)	8. Assessment by client (review by laymen)
9. Anonymity	9. Interaction

Table 1: Principles of design contest culture and public procurement culture. Based on Volker 2010, 115.

Despite the different backgrounds of design contest culture and public procurement culture, they actually have a lot in common. Both essentially focus on selection procedures for architecture. The former focuses on selecting a plan on the basis of the best offered design solution, whereas the latter focuses on selecting an eligible contract partner on the basis of the best bid (table 1). Both face similar challenges: conceiving a transparent and objective assessment method and keeping the transaction costs for all parties involved as low as possible. These cultures are corresponding vessels and inform each other. Traditionally, public procurement culture is informed by the disadvantages of

design contests. Public clients abhor an uncertain outcome of their selection processes. They want certainty and avoid every imaginable risk. Thus tender procedures are characterized by a highly formal approach, extensive requirements (turnover, experience, staff, certificates et cetera), detailed contract terms, a strong focus on price and legally binding best and final offers. Public clients desire sound products without risks and they want it as soon and as cheap as possible. Design contests, on the other hand, traditionally are informed by the disadvantages of public procurement culture. Design contests are often used as a means to offer opportunities to young designers who are not able to compete in tender procedures, to explore the full potency of architectural design outside the formal straightjacket of EU procurement. These procedures often serve image reasons as well. Clients want to profile themselves as culturally informed enlightened commissioners. It must be pointed out, that there are also clients who use design contests as a relatively cheap means to solicit 'free designs'.

The aforementioned exchange between public procurement culture and design contest culture is perceived from the client's perspective. Of course, selection procedures for architecture are also a concern to the contenders involved: the architects. Also from the architect's perspective we can discern an interaction between public procurement culture and design contest culture, but the nature of this exchange is very different. Here, public procurement perception is informed by the advantages of design contests. Architects resent excessive requirements, the strong focus on price and the absence of peer review. Similarly, perception of design contest culture is informed by the advantages of public procurement. Especially the absence in most design contests of a substantial commission to justify the transaction costs involved is very relevant. It must be pointed out that Dutch architects are also informed by foreign design competition culture (Kempe and Thill 2008; Geertse et al. 2012: 50-59). Dutch architects also compete elsewhere in Europe and thus have firsthand experience in foreign tender procedures and/or design competitions. Foreign public procurement culture and design contest culture and the relation between the two can at times be very different from Dutch commissioning practice. Of all the foreign examples, especially the Open Call, a restricted design contest with prequalification on the basis of a small portfolio, by the Flemish Chief Government Architect has a tremendous appeal to architects, especially the younger generation. Institutions such as *Architectuur Lokaal/Steunpunt* actively promulgate foreign best practices such as the Flemish Open Call (Geertse et al. 2012: 44-49).

Towards professional commissioning practice

The malpractices in Dutch design competition culture have initiated fierce public debates about public commissioning. In 2008/2009 these debates centered around the preposterous requirements in public procurement, that effectively excluded the majority of Dutch architects from tendered public contracts. The discussions were dominated by negative sentiment. Stakeholders involved blamed each other. Especially, the uninformed and inexperienced public clients were easy targets in this public discussions. Obviously something needed to be done. It was Chief Government Architect Liesbeth van der Pol who took the initiative to unite representatives of all stakeholders involved in one body, the *Regiegroep Aanbesteden*, to produce solutions on the basis of consensus. Simultaneously, *Architectuur Lokaal* set out to raise the efficiency of its *Steunpunt* with regard to public procurement. Subsequently, the activities of the *Steunpunt* and the *Regiegroep* were linked and a State subvention was secured to implement a program, to be executed by the *Steunpunt*. Both friend and foe agree the activities of the *Steunpunt* have had a significant impact on Dutch

commissioning practice for architectural design. Since June 2009 the *Steunpunt* collects all contract notices and design contests published on digital portals such as TED and TenderNed and publishes them on its website www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl. It monitors the proceedings of these procedures up to the final contract award. More importantly, it writes a letter with suggestions for improvements of the published brief, both solicited and unsolicited, to the contact of the procedure. Thus the *Steunpunt* actively contributes to eliminating legal errors and reducing disproportionate requirements, criteria and contract terms. It actively promulgates implementing practical attributes from design contest culture into public procurement, such as expert review, emphasis on quality instead of price, remuneration for design services rendered during the procedure (Geertse et al. 2010: 18-19).

Based on the knowledge gathered by monitoring tender procedures for design services, the *Steunpunt* developed a digital tool which enables public clients to produce a brief for their tender procedure for architectural design services: KOMPAS light. The first version of KOMPAS light was published in December 2009. At the moment the third version is running online (SAO 2013). This digital tool was well received by architects, advisors and public clients (Geertse et al 2012: 11, 20-21, 29-33). In 2012 the *Steunpunt* published a new installment in the KOMPAS light family: *KOMPAS light Prijsvragen* (SAO 2012). This new KOMPAS focuses on improving design contest culture. Whereas the first KOMPAS light introduces attributes of design contest culture in public procurement, the second KOMPAS introduces attributes of Dutch public procurement culture and of foreign design contest culture into Dutch design contest culture. These attributes mainly regard the proportionality principle (anchored in the new Public Procurement Act) and the principle of a two-tier selection process to reduce transaction costs (based both on the proportionality principle and design contest practice abroad). The year 2013 witnessed the first Dutch design contest organized by means of the new branch of the KOMPAS light family: the open call The Hague, Building on each other (Municipality of The Hague 2013). The KOMPAS light instruments predefine the legal structure of procedures – thus promoting standardization, which can lead to reduced transaction costs – to enable clients to focus on their ambition, rather than to sideline them in legal trivialities. This campaign is further supported by collecting and disseminating best practices (Geertse et al 2011).

Although the *Steunpunt* can claim some success in improving Dutch design competition culture, it by no means is solely responsible for the recent changes. Purchasing professionals in the Netherlands have adopted a change of paradigm (Rietveld 2010). Realization had dawned that increased incentives to exclusively compete on price are irresponsible. Value maximization increasingly is sought by offering a fixed or maximum fee to stimulate competition on quality. As long as market operators stay within budget, the qualitative best bid wins. Experts are increasingly called upon for consultation with regard to the assessment of qualitative bids. So, general public procurement culture as a whole is slowly accumulating attributes of classic design contest culture. Moreover, market operators' lobby organizations, especially those representing SMEs, have successfully lobbied in the Hague for a new Public Procurement Act that offers more safeguards for entrepreneurs. The new Dutch Public Procurement Act rewards these lobbies and introduces a whole string of rules to improve public procurement practice, such as an obligation to reduce administrative burdens, compulsory guidelines with regard to the proportionality of procedures and the discouragement of lowest price as sole awarding criterion (Chao-Duivis & Kluitenberg 2013). Of course, these legal changes also promise to affect architect selections, but it is still too early to determine the exact impact of the new public procurement legislation.

Changes are not just reinforced on the national level. Although a lot of local authorities

struggle with the proper organization of design competition culture, some municipalities actually pride themselves in being enlightened commissioners. Especially the Municipality of Rotterdam which has given itself the title ‘Architecture City of the Netherlands’ is making a serious effort to institutionalize a thriving municipal design competition culture. After the commotion surrounding the tender procedure for design services for its new town hall (2009), the municipality radically changed tack in its architectural policy (Brouwers & Maandag 2010). Enlightened commissioning is a spearhead of this new policy. The policy is implemented through the *Protocol Designers’ Selections* (table 2). Architect selections must be of a high standard, simple and accessible. All selection procedures are publicly announced to secure accessibility for all interested architects. Small (<€ 30.000) and medium commissions (€ 30.000–€ 150.000) are published on the site of the *Steunpunt*. Large commissions (>€ 150.000) are published on TenderNed. Every category has its own proportionate requirements, a considerate and transparent assessment (including peer review) and an emphasis on architectural quality. For small commissions Rotterdam uses its own Open Call which is based on the well-known Flemish Counterpart. Interested architects send in a small portfolio. On the basis of the received portfolios 3-5 architects are invited to a restricted procedure in which they are asked to draft a design for a fixed remuneration. Assessment is being carried out by a jury.

Protocol ontwerper selectie
Stadsontwikkeling (OBR ds+V IGWR)
27.06.2011

1. Honorarium	2. Voorbereiding	3. Publicatie	4. Selectie	5. Gunning	6. Verantwoording	7. Commissie	8. Doorlooptijd
	Ambitie Complexiteit Betekenis Tijd Budget (/m2) Vraagspecificatie Commissie		Veel deelnemers	3-5 deelnemers			
< 30.000 Klein	Visie 7	Steunpunt Ontwerpedstrijden 21	Portfolio CV 7	(n.v.t.)	(n.v.t.)	Intern	35 dg (5 wk)
	Ontwerp 7	Steunpunt Ontwerpedstrijden 21	Portfolio CV 7	Ontwerp 21	Gunning + Media 14	Intern	77 dg (11 wk)
30.000 – 150.000 Middel	Visie 14	Steunpunt Ontwerpedstrijden 21	Referentieproject 14	CV 10 % 1-5 pt 21 Visie 60 % 1-5 pt Honorarium 30 % 1-5 pt	Gunning 21	Intern	84 dg (12 wk)
	Ontwerp 14	Steunpunt Ontwerpedstrijden 21	Referentieproject 14	Ontwerp 35	Gunning + Media 21	Intern	98 dg (14 wk)
> 150.000 Groot	Visie 14	Aanbestedingskalender 37	Referentieprojecten Solvabiliteit 14	CV's 10 % 1-5 pt 40 Visie 60 % 1-5 pt Honorarium 30 % 1-5 pt	Selectie + Gunning + Media 37	Intern	161 dg (23 wk)
	Ontwerp 14	Aanbestedingskalender 37	Referentieprojecten Solvabiliteit 14	Ontwerp 61	Selectie + Gunning + Media 37	Extern Intern	182 dg (26 wk)

Table 2: Protocol Designers’ Selections of Rotterdam Municipality. Source: Rotterdam Municipality

Conclusion

How to summarize the main points of this article? Like in most European countries, design competition culture in the Netherlands is not homogeneous. It comprises two distinctly different cultures: public procurement culture and design contest culture. Each culture has its own distinct background. Public procurement culture clearly is dominant. Forced by the European Public Procurement Directives, Dutch ‘awarding authorities’ – first and foremost municipalities - are obliged to publicly tender all public contracts for design services that represent values above the European thresholds. Design services are increasingly procured through integrated contracting. Although both

traditional and integrated contracting are used by different clients for all kinds of commissions, we nevertheless can identify distinct preferences. Tenders are the domain of settled architectural firms; start-ups and SMEs experience great difficulties competing in public procurement. Design contests are primarily organized by cultural and professional institutions. The assignments cover a wide range of subjects that often defy categorization. Nevertheless, we can discern distinct anchor points in housing, public space and sociocultural facilities. Design contests mainly attract young architects and small firms.

To the uninformed beholder public procurement culture and design contest culture represent different, strictly separated worlds. Public procurement focuses on the economic aspect of architecture. Architectural design essentially is a service to be purchased. Design contests stress the cultural component of architectural design and champion agency and autonomy of design. However, they are not rigidly separated, but are 'communicating vessels'. From the clients' perspective, public procurement culture is primarily informed by negative feedbacks from design contest culture and design contest culture by negative feedbacks from public procurement culture. However, the architect's perspective on public procurement is informed by positive feedbacks from design contest culture, whereas his perception of design contest culture is informed by positive feedbacks from public procurement culture.

The exchange between these two cultures fuels a fierce public debate about malpractices in Dutch design competition culture. Under the influence of this debate and its demand of a professionalization of Dutch commissioning practice, public procurement culture and design contest culture are slowly growing towards each other. Public procurement culture appropriates attributes from design contest culture, whereas the latter borrows properties from procurement culture. This trend of *rapprochement* is facilitated by the actions of dedicated institutions, such as *Architectuur Lokaal/Steunpunt*, the successful lobby of branch organizations, especially the ones representing SMEs, for improved public procurement legislation that safeguards proportionality and accessibility, and the exemplary commissioning practice of enlightened public commissioners such as Rotterdam Municipality.

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