

MANIPULATIONS OF ARCHITECTURE OF POWER; GERMAN NEW REICHSCANCELLERY IN BERLIN 1938 - 1939 BY ALBERT SPEER

Marek Antoszczyszyn

Studio Projektowe AB S.C.
ul. Królowej Jadwigi 23/11a
70-262 Szczecin
e-mail: markant100@yahoo.pl

Abstract: The subject of the following article is presentation of the research on architectural manipulations to induce specific emotions for political purposes. An excellent sample for such a survey is German New Reichschancellery performed by Albert Speer in Berlin in the years 1938 - 1939. He became Hitler's main architect, for he understood best than others Hitler's ideas, especially the one about assigning the role to the architecture to glorify the greatness of the Third Reich even thousand years later. Additionally, the article describes the research on contemporary perception of these manipulations in order to check out their timeliness today. The survey is a part of vast research on the associations & emotions of totalitarian system architecture designed in the 1930s and 1940s.

Keywords: admiration, Albert Speer, emotional perception, fear, geometry, ideological influence of architecture, Reichschancellery, totalitarian system architecture, open survey.

Introduction

Today we have knowledge that Nazi system emphasized various propaganda means to manipulate the German society for political benefits. Thanks to German Reichskanzler and Leader (Führer) of the nation - Adolf Hitler architecture took a special role in that process. As an unfulfilled architect – he was aware of enormously giant influence of architecture on the community. He found young Albert Speer, 28 - year - old German architect to cooperate with him about designing and constructing structures that would both manipulate the masses and express the power of the authority to last for a millennium. Hitler himself formulated his notion on architecture in his speech on 7th of September 1937 during NSDAP Nuremberg Rally in the following words: *These works of ours shall also be eternal; that is to say, not only in greatness of their conception, but in their clarity of plan, in harmony of their proportions, they shall satisfy the requirements of eternity. These buildings of ours should be conceived for neither for 1942 year nor for the 2000 year, but like the cathedrals of our past they shall stretch into the Millennium off the future* [1]. On the occasion of his speech in Deutsche Kunst Museum in Munich on 10th of December 1938, Hitler stated, that he expects structures to be built as great as technically possible in order to create them *for eternity* [1]. According to Albert Speer's diary, he himself with his architectural designing approach was expected to be kind of Hitler's heir to convey national – socialist ideas into immortality. This is what Hitler had told him once cit.: *You attracted my notice during our rounds. I was looking for an architect to whom I could entrust my building plans. I wanted someone young: for*

as you know these plans extend far into the future. I need someone who will be able to continue after my death with the authority I have conferred him. I saw you as that man [3]. Since becoming appointed as a Reichskanzler (State Chancellor, first minister) in 1933, Hitler often complained about limited size and poor state of his office at Old Chancellery at Wilhelmstraße 77, unbefitting the dignity of his figure. January 1938 appeared to be decisive, when Hitler declared Speer cit.: *I have an urgent assignment for you. I shall be holding extremely important conferences in the near future. For these, I need grand halls and salons which will make an impression on people, especially on the smaller dignitaries. For the site I am placing the whole of the Voßstraße at your disposal. The cost is immaterial, but the job must be completed very quickly and be of solid construction. How long do you need? For plans, blueprints, everything? Even a year and a half or two years would be too long for me. Can you be done by 10 January 1939? I want to hold next diplomatic reception in the New Chancellery* [4]. This statement explains almost everything about what purposes the Nazi architecture was expected to serve for. As we know, pacifist attitude occurring after Second World War in the whole Europe as well as a need of quick rehabilitation of inhabitation structure gave almost unrestricted development for modernistic architecture which lasted till the 1980s. But such almost uncontrolled process led to superficial results and the bulk of them are curious and unacceptable. Some induce reluctance and repulsion as well as admiration, excitement or respect. Actually these are emotions that Nazi architecture generated to the German society as well. Such a collation is highly worrisome. This is why today it seems reasonable to find

out if the manipulations in architecture to induce such emotions are universal in order to point them out and check out if nowadays we are manipulated by architecture like during the Nazi period.

Survey material and methodology

Survey material

In the beginning of the contemporary survey the separation of ideology from the perception of architecture has been assured. Totalitarian architecture was supposed to achieve political benefits thanks to some perceptual codes, consciously hidden in it. The respondents recalling totalitarian indoctrination (regardless of its origin) probably would respond involving their ideological associations from the past. To assure the impartiality of the survey sample a group of young men has been selected. All of them were architects as they were supposed to point out some compositional instruments that induce the emotions they felt during the survey. Presumably there was nobody but for an architect who could have performed it better. This is the reason why the research was carried out by polling methods in respondent group of young architects aged 20–30 years paying none or insignificant connotation of Nazis in shown objects during the survey.

Methodology

Featured survey is a part of broad research on emotional influence of totalitarian architecture from the 1930s and 1940s. The research was based on „*diagnostic poll (sounding)*” method. According to B. Dunaj it means cit.: ... *research of public opinion, based on collecting answers the same questions asked of a group of people* [5]. According to T. Pilch cit.: *method of diagnostic poll (sounding) is means of gathering the knowledge about structural and functional attributes as well as about society phenomena dynamics, opinions and notions of chosen collectivities (...) basing on especially selected group to represent general population* [6]. For the needs of the presented research, a survey has been used. According to W. Zaczyński it is a method of cit.: *independent data acquiring by questioning chosen people by means of printed question list, called questionnaire* [7]. On the other hand W. Okoń defines it as cit.: *mass phenomena study basing on especially prepared questionnaire* [8].

In order not to suggest any ideological notion known from the past the formula of the survey is open as it comprises so called *open* and *half – open* questions. Gathering and selection of responds in open survey is more difficult than *closed* formula of the survey as the answers in the first type are extremely scattered depending on very subjective awareness, sensitivity and experience of each respondent. Anyway, on the actual preliminary research phase it was necessary to carry out *open survey* in order to select most characteristic associations and emotions arising from shown architecture. *Open survey* can be classified as a *quality* method. The next phase of the pooling would be survey

consisting of so called *closed questions*, which means that the respondents would only sign their ratings on the answers previously provided by the pollster. This would allow the use of quantity methods. Gathering both phases of survey, the whole process can be classified as *panel process*.

The method could be classified as *quasi – representative*, because the sample group comprised of young architects aged 20–30 years only. They were questioned with the pollster’s presence in groups of 8-10 persons so it is *point – black, auditorium* method. The respondents have not been supposed to mention out their names (they set out only general data like age, profession, gender, nationality and so on) so the survey could be classified as *anonymous*. The respondents had to point out imaginable function, period of erection, architectural style as well as associations & emotions these objects generated so the method is classified as an *omnibus* type. In the last stage of the survey all the results were summarized and collated in tables and presented in percentage. This stage therefore is classified as *quantity* method.

Referring to the abovementioned, all the methods used in the research could be classified as: *open, quality* and *quantity, quasi – representative, point – black* and *auditorium, omnibus* and the whole research is classified as a *panel process*.

The course of the survey

The survey (Fig. 1) was conducted in 8–10 person groups one after another without possibility to contact the respondents between them in December 2015. The polling sample consisted of 35 young Polish architects 20-30-year-old. During the survey a series of four pictures of New Reichscancellery in Berlin was shown approximately for 3 minutes (see Fig. 2, 6, 10, 14). Every respondent was supposed to point out the author, architectonical style, period of erection, and function. Eventually every one of them was supposed to describe in a few words his emotions and associations he felt during the slideshow. It was also important to point out the compositional instruments to create these emotions & associations. The questions about the objects' features were set off to check up if the respondents had been ideologically influenced. This part of survey showed that almost nobody could point out either the exact author or the associations with the Nazis. It proved that the assumption to choose young generation of respondents for the survey was right.

Referring to the fact that audio and light visual effects were also applied during the mass shows involving Nazi architecture, the music of M.J. Burkard *Director's Cut* album DCD042, *Epic Themes 2* was performed in order to create most congenial conditions to the originals [9].

Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire form is shown in the Fig. 1.

Results of the research

All the responds from the first unit concerning the knowledge of observed architecture have been classified in the diagrams displayed in the Fig. 3, 7, 11, 15. In the same manner, the responds from the second unit

concerning associations of observed architecture have been displayed in the diagrams in the Fig. 4, 8, 12, 16. Eventually the responds from the third unit concerning emotions of observed objects have been classified in the diagram displayed in the Fig. 5, 9, 13, 17.

ANKIETA OTWARTA: BADANIE EMOCJI PERCEPCJI OBIEKTÓW ARCHITEKTONICZNYCH					
DATA BADANIA:					
DANE SEGMENTU ANKIETOWANEGO:					
Grupa wiekowa (wiek) ankietywanego:					
Osobisty profil psychologiczny wg ankietywanego: (introwertyk, ekstrawertyk, racjonalista, romantyk, marzyciel, formalista, pedant, szczegółarz , uogólniacz, kreatywny, odtwórczy, aktywny, bierny, inny (dopisać))					
Narodowość ankietywanego:					
Płeć ankietywanego:					
Grupa zawodowa ankietywanego:					
Wykształcenie ankietywanego:					
Zainteresowania prywatne (hobby) ankietywanego:					
Preferowany przez ankietywanego styl architektoniczny/kierunek w sztuce wizualnej:					
Hierarchia ważności w architekturze wg ankietywanego: A. Funkcja; B. Forma; C. Konstrukcja; D. Ekonomia					
No	Przypuszczalna: 01 nazwa/funkcja obiektu 02 styl 03 architekt 04 okres/data wybudowania	Skojarzenia ankietywanego przy percepcji obiektu ze wskazaniem elementów budynku i jego kompozycji wywołujących takie skojarzenia. Ocena w skali 1-10.	Opis emocji ankietywanego przy percepcji obiektu ze wskazaniem elementów budynku i jego kompozycji wywołujących takie skojarzenia. Ocena w skali 1-10.	Ocena ankietywanego w „ liście ” w skali 1-10	-- ¹⁰ .. ¹⁷

Fig. 1. The questionnaire form [source: own].



Fig. 2. Neue Reichskanzlei Berlin, (designed by Albert Speer: 1938-1939); Front façade [13].

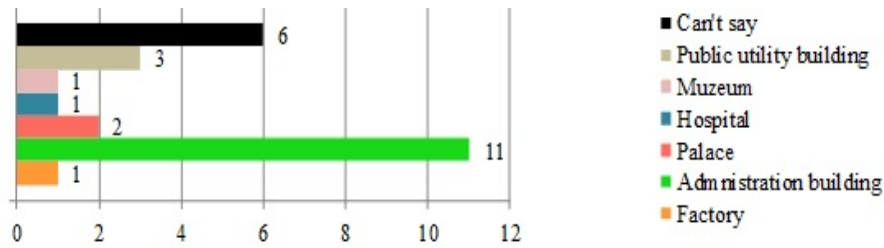


Fig. 3. Imagined function code [source: own].

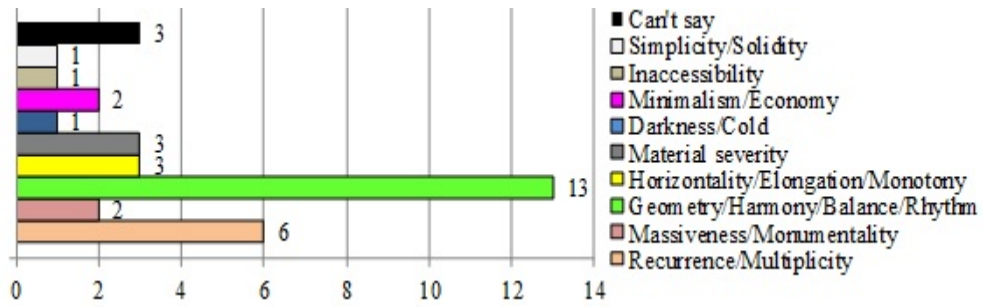


Fig. 4. Association features [source: own].



Fig. 5. Emotional features [source: own].



Fig. 6. Neue Reichskanzlei Berlin, (designed by Albert Speer: 1938-1939); Mosaic Hall [14].

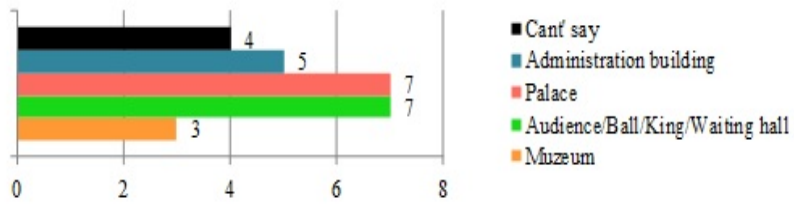


Fig. 7. Imagined function code [Source: own].

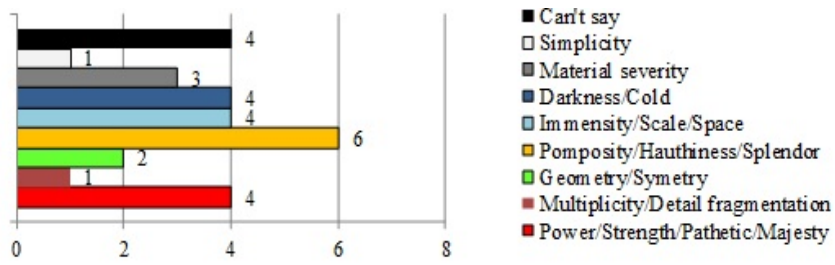


Fig. 8. Association features [source: own].

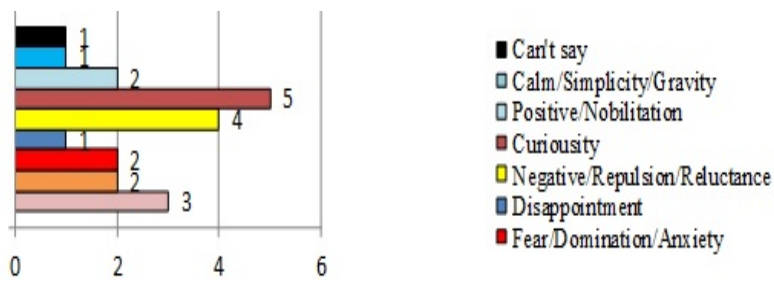


Fig. 9. Emotional features [source: own].



Fig. 10. Neue Reichskanzlei Berlin, (designed by Albert Speer: 1938-1939); The Great Hall [15].

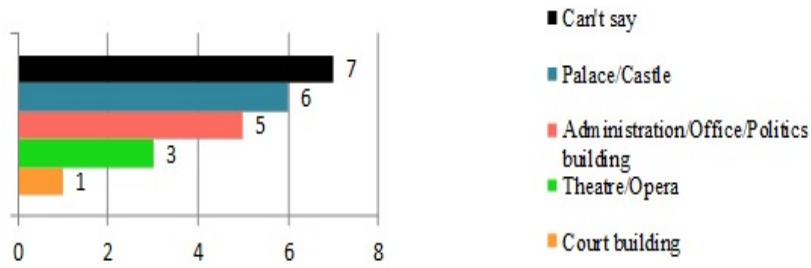


Fig. 11. Imagined function code [source: own].

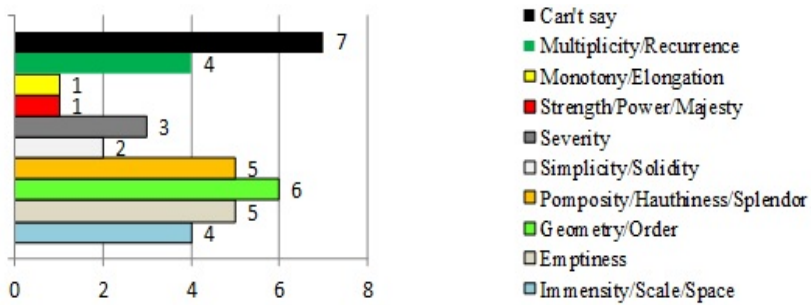


Fig. 12. Association features [source: own].

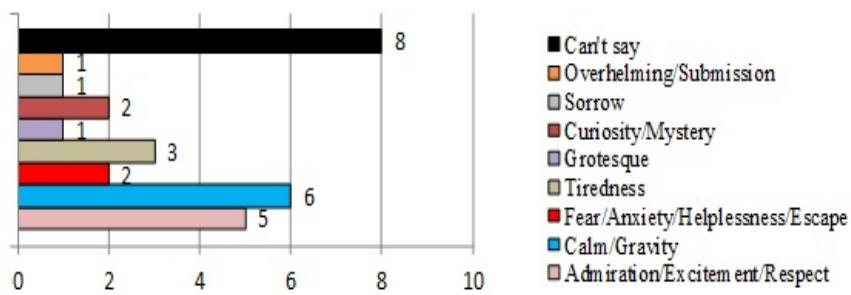


Fig. 13. Emotional features [source: own].



Fig 14. Neue Reichskanzlei Berlin, (designed by Albert Speer: 1938-1939); Inner court [2].

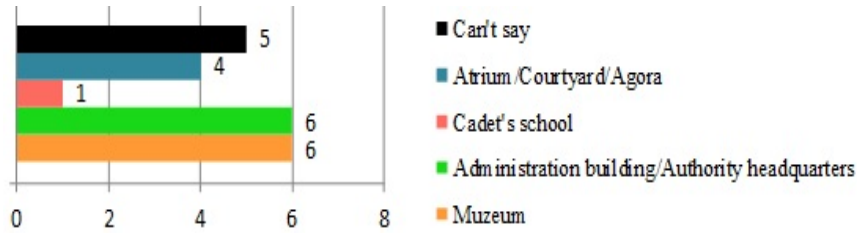


Fig. 15. Imagined function code [source: own].

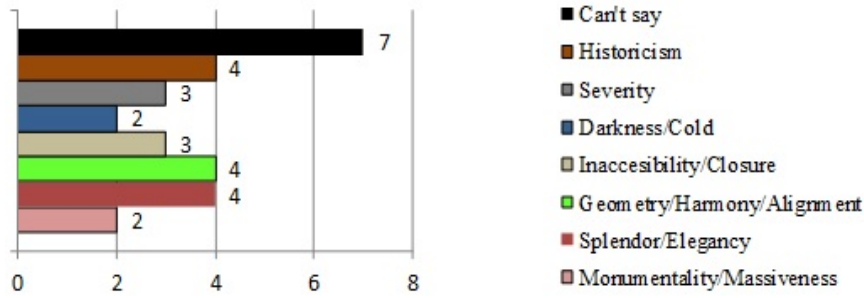


Fig. 16. Association features [source: own].

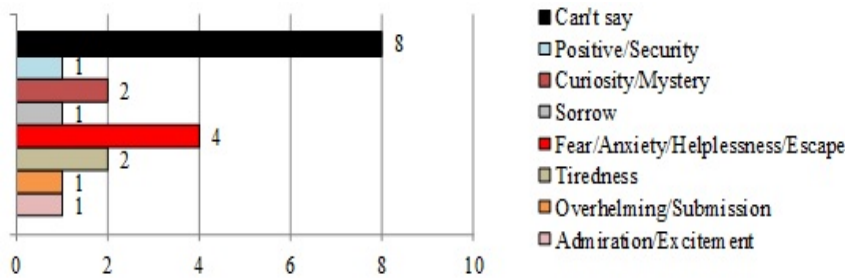


Fig. 17. Emotional features [source: own].

Discussion on the results of the research

Final results on associational and emotional survey have been displayed accordingly in tables 1 and 2. The penultimate columns of the tables contain arithmetically summarized respondents' assessments. The last ones show the percentage of each type of assessment in relation to the whole amount of the ratings including those *can't say*. The results on association & emotion survey have been grouped decreasingly in order to point out highly scored ratings on the top. During the discussion on the survey results these would be the subject of particular attention. They would also be applied in the questionnaire form on the stage of *closed polling*.

First Unit: research on the functional code

In order to verify the hazard of ideological influence of the Nazi architecture the results of control questions

from first unit should be commented first. The diagrams displayed in the Fig. 3, 7, 12, 15 show that generally the function code of the object has been identified. Such answers as: *authority headquarters, administration/office/politics building/public utility building* properly describe the real destination of the object. Besides, there were a few ratings pointing out representative character of the object like: *palace, castle, opera house*. But it must be pointed out that some strange answers like: *cadet school, museum* as well as *hospital* or *factory* also occurred. Few respondents pointed out in additional notes, that the object shown in the photos was Hitler's Chancellor, but it was only in 2 ratings which doesn't exceed 5% of the polling population. So, in spite of generally right connotation of the object's functional code we might conclude, that is not perceived as a Nazi one and the survey sample of respondents is out of the ideological influence.

Tab. 1. Results on the associational features research [%] [source: own].

Associational features for object: Neue Reich's in Berlin 1937-1938	Fig. No				Results	
	2	3	4	5	pts	%
Geometry/Order/Harmony/Balance/Alignment/Symmetry/Rhythm	13	2	6	4	25	19,9
Can't say	3	4	7	7	21	16,03
Pomposity/Haughtiness/Splendor/Elegancy	-	6	5	4	15	11,46
Severity in form & material	3	3	3	3	12	9,16
Recurrence/Multiplicity	6	1	4	-	11	8,40
Immensity/Scale/Space	-	4	4	-	8	6,10
Datkness/Coldness	1	4	-	2	7	5,34
Emptiness	-	-	5	-	5	3,82
Power/Strength/Domination/Majesty	-	4	1	-	5	3,82
Inaccessibility/Closure	1	-	-	3	4	3,05
Simplicity/Solidity	1	1	2	-	4	3,05
Horizontalitiy/Elongation/Monotony	3	-	1	-	4	3,05
Massiveness/Monumentality	2	-	-	2	4	3,05
Historicism	-	-	-	4	4	3,05
Minimalism/Economy	2	-	-	-	2	1,53

Second Unit: research on the associational features

Final results of the associational features research are displayed in the Table 1. Significant percentage of answers *can't say* should be pointed out. By percentages, it was the second one of all ratings, as it reached 16,03% - just 3% less than the highest rated *Geometry/Order/Harmony/Balance/Alignment/Symmetry/Rhythm*, which reached 19,09%. It shouldn't be surprising that geometry in all of its aspects like harmony, symmetry, rhythm and order is mostly associated with Nazi architecture and German architecture in general. One must realize that traditionalism and clarity is a well known feature of the Germans nation. Hitler often underlined cit.: *To be German means to be clear* [10]. The best way is to express clarity in art and geometry as it's predictable and Nazis wanted architecture representing their movement to be understandable for the masses. *Simplicity/Solidity* association of this architecture has very similar connotation although in was rated only 3,05%. Such a low rating is probably derived from exactly similar values between geometry and simplicity. This is why respondents mentioned more often geometry as an instrument of simplicity. The third position in percentage was taken by associations about *Pomposity/Haughtiness/Splendor/Elegancy* which were rated 11,46%. These associations are accompanied by very similar ones: *Power/Strength/Domination/Majesty* rated only 3,82% as probably some of the respondents expressed their feelings in group of pomposity – elegance associations. Such a result proves the efficiency of Albert Speer's work regarding Hitler's order – declaration mentioned [4]. Also associations like *Severity in form and material* rated 9,16% as well as *Darkness/ Coldness* (rated 5,34%) have been pointed out. In fact, the severity is one of the most important features of Nazi architecture and semantically it is very close to coldness. Speer frequently used travertine stone laid on cubic mass of the edifices to symbolize durability. He also put emphasis on right angles, great flat surfaces on the facades and solid

angular decoration. In this way his buildings were an implementation of simplified neo – classical standards and some modern abstract formalism derived from the 1920s. Such a combination certainly generates a feeling of severity. The respondents rated *Recurrence/Multiplicity* for 8,40% which comes together with another group of features: *Horizontalitiy/Elongation/Monotony* rated 3,05%. These elements of composition occurred in Nazi architecture to symbolize durability, extension and omnipresence of the authority. The survey points out occurrence of such associations as *Immensity/Scale/Space* rated 6,10% which was accompanied by *Massiveness/Monumentality* rated 3,05%. These features acted to overwhelm and dominate potential visitors to the chancellery in order to – as Hitler declared - cit.: *...make an impression on people, especially on the smaller dignitaries* [4]. Probably most spectacular prove of the effectiveness of this feature was the visit of the President of Czech - President Emil Hacha on 15th March 1939. He was led by the midnight through a few hundred meters long way of awesome, dim and disorienting emptiness of endless space to the Hitler's office. When Emil Hacha left the Chancellery, his country had ceased to exist without a single shot. During his visit his nerves completely gave way which eventually led to a heart attack. Finally at 4.15 am President Hacha signed the act in which he cit.: *...trustfully laid the fate of the Czech people and country into the hands of Führer of the German Reich....* [11]. The whole civilized world was shocked: nobody could predict how much more Hitler would achieve in his bloodless political aggression based on bluff and intimidation in which manipulations of Speer's architecture played the significant role. Hitler estimated the effect of the chancellery in the following words cit.: *...well done. Now, my opponents would learn what a fear means* [3]. The respondents also pointed out the historicism rated 3,05%. For Nazi totalitarian system it was quite an important symbol to point out that its

ideology was directly deriving from the greatness of the ancient Greek and Roman cultures.

Third Unit: research on the emotional features

Final results of the emotional features research are shown in Table 2.

Tab. 2 Results on the emotional features research [%][source: own].

Emotional features for object: Neue Reich's in Berlin 1937-1938	Fig. No				Results	
	2	3	4	5	pts	%
Can't say	2	1	8	8	19	18,63
Fear/Anxiety/Domination/Helplessness/Escape	4	2	2	4	16	15,69
Calm/Simplicity/Gravity	5	1	6	-	12	11,76
Admiration/Excitement/Respect	1	3	5	1	10	9,80
Curiosity/Mystery	1	5	2	2	10	9,80
Tiredness	5	-	1	2	8	7,84
Negative/Repulsion/Reluctance	3	4	-	-	7	6,87
Overwhelming/Submission	1	2	1	1	5	4,91
Positive/Hope/Nibilation/Security/Agreement	1	2	-	1	4	3,92
Neutrality	4	-	-	-	4	3,92
Order	4	-	-	-	4	3,92
Sorrow	-	-	1	1	2	1,96
Grotesque	-	-	1	-	1	0,98

Like at associational survey, relatively large percentage of answers *can't say* should be pointed out – it reached 18,63%. Emotions were second by rating: *Fear/Anxiety/Domination/Helplessness/Escape* with 15,69% ratings. Emotions: *Calm/Simplicity/ Gravity* with ratings of 11,76% show, that the regime under solemnity and dignified calm is able to assure everybody care and protection in all domains of social life. The group of emotions: *Admiration/Excitement/Respect* as well as *Curiosity/Mystery* rated 9,80% each are just adequate for representative role that chancellery played. Other emotions: *Positive/Hope/Ennoblement/Security, Neutrality, Grotesque, Order* and *Sorrow* should be examined more precisely on the stage of *closed polling*, to point out their real significance.

Conclusions

As for the highest percentage of answers *can't say*, in both units concerning associational & emotional features, it should be pointed out, that contemporary

architecture in Poland has entered the phase of emotional crisis for some time. Such fact might mean that Polish architects of young generation do have huge problems with articulation of their emotions.

The survey proves that architecture of Reichschancellery designed by Albert Speer is full of manipulations strictly bound with political targets of the regime and its awesome ideology. It was set out to induce fear and anxiety to those who were against his will and ideas but it also brought a positive alternative suggesting alliance with his regime which is expressed in such emotions as admiration, excitement and respect. It shows how strong political weapon architecture might be. And the further history shows how dangerous it could be in hands of nationalistic dictators. Hitler mentioned once cit.: *My actions are always based on a political way of thinking* [12]. Each architect should take into consideration first to whom he provides his services. The case of Albert Speer shows that lack of criticism in professional attitude might be eventually very dangerous for an architect himself.

References

1. Domarus, M.B., Hitler. Speeches and Proclamations 1935 - 1938. The Chronicle of Dictatorship, Vol.2, Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy – Carduzzi Publishers, Inc., 1992.
2. <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/reichskanzlei3> (access 7.01.2016).
3. Speer, A., Errinerungen, Verlag Ullstein GmbH, Frankfurt/M.- Berlin, 1968.
4. Cowdery, R., Cowdery, J., The New German Reichschancellery in Berlin 1938–45, Rapid City: USM Incorporated, 2003.
5. Dunaj, B., (Red.) Słownik współczesnego języka polskiego, Wydawnictwo Wilga, Warszawa 1996.
6. Pilch, T., Zasady badań pedagogicznych, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, Warszawa 1998.
7. Zaczyński, W., Praca badawcza nauczyciela, Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa, 1995.
8. Okoń, W., Nowy słownik pedagogiczny, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, Warszawa, 1998.

9. Burkard, M.J., Director's Cut', DC D042.Divinum Music, < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Or9A-sRvNtU> (access 7.01.2016).
10. Adam, P., Art of the Third Reich, NY: Harry N. Abrams Incorporated, 1992.
11. Pawly, R., Hitler's Chancellery; A Palace to Last a Thousand Years, Ramsbury: The Crowood Press Ltd., 2009.
12. Bundes Archive R 43 II/1016, 76. A letter from Speer to Lammers from August 30, 1940.
13. <http://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/6286-albert-speer-architecture-1932-1942> (access 7.01.2016).
14. <http://www.unav.es/ha/001-TEOR/reichskanzlei/reichskanzlei-008.jpg> (access 7.01.2016).
15. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-K1216-501,_Berlin,_Neue_Reichskanzlei,_Marmorgalerie.jpg (access 7.01.2016).