

University Campus Gates as a Tool of Identity Representation

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Abstract: With information age, it has become one of the primary aims of universities to contribute to transforming knowledge into social power. The university institution has to establish a domain of influence spreading out from the micro-scale without isolating itself, because the knowledge produced must respond in social life and enter public circulation. This micro scale should be the urban environment in which the university is physically located. Therefore, today's universities should first strengthen their relationship with their immediate surroundings, starting from the nearest. Within the plurality, fluidity and complexity of social life, the process of building identities for individuals is an obligation. Similarly, public institutions also have to separate themselves from the context they are part of and establish their own identities. While doing so, university institutions put their special qualities in the foreground and design the representation of their institutional structures for the outside world. In this sense campus gates have great importance as the interface between city and university. These architectural constructions, which are designed as introductory buildings to represent the university, are the places where physical interaction between city and university first takes place. The aim of this study is to discuss the architectural qualities of campus gates of universities in Turkey and try to decipher the forms in which identity formation takes place through given examples. In order to create a general panorama the examples were chosen without any distinctions such as private/state University, urban/ non-urban University, old/new university, etc.

Keywords: Architectural design; Identity; Campus gates; City; locality

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1. Introduction

The information age we are going through necessitates the production and control of information for societies that have to sustain their existence and their integration in the globalizing world. Universities are the institutions influenced by the transformation at the most, and they have to adapt the developments in the world of information in order to exist. This is because universities are the very places where the production and consumption of information are centered around, and the means of information vary most.^[1] Universities are the latest and widest circle in the education and schooling sequence of societies,^[2] and their duty is to transform the regular individuals into qualified ones through education. The main aims and responsibilities of the universities are to produce and spread knowledge and ideas.^[3] The information age holds universities responsible for considering information as a social concern and for direct contribution to its development as a social strength.^[4]

The information produced should correspond to the realities of social realm, and get into public circulation; universities have to create a sphere of influence to contribute such circulation starting from their micro scale, which is first and foremost the urban space the universities physically exist. Therefore, the modern universities have to enhance their

relationships with their close environments, and to transform the potentials they produce into surplus value.

In Turkey, 92 new universities have been established in the last ten years, and the number of universities reached to a total of 196. The recent government policies include the motivation to provide at least one university in each and every city, and the universities established have to position themselves in such competitive environment with their autonomous structure.

The plurality, liquidity and complexity of social life, institutions, similar to individuals, have to construct their identity to differentiate from others, and to become special in the sphere they belong to. Universities design the representations of their institutional structures and emphasize their special characteristics while constructing their identities. Campus gates are of utmost importance since they are the spaces where the relationships between the cities and the universities begin. These architectural structures do not only function as the entrance to universities, but also work as interfaces between them and the cities, and as tools of their identity representation. This paper aims at deciphering the identity construction processes in a number of cases by analyzing the architectural characteristics of campus gates. In order to reach to a general panorama, the samples have been chosen by a criterion of architectural quality, regardless of whether the universities are

state or foundation universities, whether they are inside or outside of the cities, and whether they are new or old.

2. "Identity" as a Concept

The word "identity" is defined by the Turkish Language Association as follows: "1.The entirety of all the distinguishing attributes, features and characteristics of an individual as a social being, which make him/her who s/he is. 2.Document or ID card that has someone's name and other information about him/her. 3.The entirety of all the characteristics to distinguish an object."^[5] This definition limitedly attributes "identity" to individuals and objects; however, today each and every "thing" needs an identity ontologically. This identity might voluntarily be determined, or it can be a process the context of which would be constructed in time. Identity, thus, cannot be limited to a concept which defines human beings only.

City, in its narrowest sense, is defined as "a settlement, the population of which mostly deal with trade, industry or administration; where agricultural activities do not take place".^[5] Non-agricultural production is dominant in the city where the means of production and population centres around. The city is consisted of high levels of integrity, while uniformity cannot be observed.^[6]

Universities are institutions directly related to urban formations, thus, the concept "urban identity" is also crucial for our topic. Cities are in a continuous process of improving the qualities of the services they provide, and of keeping up with the times in an ever-transforming global world order; so they complete their structural development and review their administrative mechanisms. This structural and administrative evolution is determined by globalization. Globalization shrinks the world, and at the same time emphasizes fragmenting differences paradoxically. The variety of local cultures emerged in such a way that competition among the localities and cities is stimulated. Intense improvements in international communication have made the interaction between the local and the global much more intense, and have resulted in the emergence of new fragmentations and "localities".

Lynch defines "identity" as the originality and difference of an object from all others, and claims that identity is not identical to anything else; it is unique.^[7] Prohansky, Fabian and Kaminoff define the identity of a city, which it has as a place, as a base of individual identity. It is a compilation of memories, ideas, interpretations, opinions and emotions on specialized physical settings. The identity of a place is a sense of belonging to that place stemming from the identity of it.^[8]

According to Bott, Cantrill and Myers, place is an outcome of the merging physical and cultural characteristics together with individual interactions and needs.^[9] Bott, Cantrill and Myers' approach to identity also includes the formation of identity of place by specialized and distinct symbols as a product of various emotions. These symbols emerge as the first impressions and experiences of the place in the first encounter. Ardoin emphasizes the spirit of the place too, and defines four dimensions of it as follows:

- (1) Bio-physical or physical formations that influences the buildings and the natural environment;
- (2) Individual psychology determined by the physical context of the place;
- (3) Socio-cultural elements related to social communities and cultural concepts;
- (4) Political and economic elements as the reflections of local procedures.

Departing from these definitions of place and its identity, it can be claimed that global world imposes the possession of a well-defined identity, which contains the physical and social characteristics of urban spaces, and becomes crystallized as the set of constrained features of the city. Thus, all the elements that exist in the city are to contribute the formation of its identity. At the end, the values which belong to the city determine the definition of it. Therefore, each city has a distinct image, and this image is the identity of that city.^[10]

The discussion on the identity of cities has a direct impact on universities. As will be seen in the further chapters of the present study, universities mostly stick to the identities of the cities they are built in while constructing their identities. Institutional identity is determined by the institutional dynamics; however, contextual dynamics also get involved. Corporate identity, similar to individual and urban identities, is the way of representation of that institution. However, unlike them, the basic characteristics of an institution are produced from the scratch, and thus the corporate identity can be designed from scratch.

As claimed above, institutions also have their own distinct identities, characters, virtues and traits that make them different from the others. Identity is not for human beings only; all the organizations, institutions and establishments, which have various roles in the social realm, have their own identities.^[11] The identity of an institution is the entirety of the forms the institution represents itself; and identity is defined as follows: "The entirety of activities which direct the perception of the institution's representation." Initial visible aspects of the cor-

porate identity are logos, business cards, headed letter papers and so on. However, a corporate identity necessitates institutionalization first.^[12]

Highhouse et.al., in their survey in the corporations such as American Express, Dow, Exxon, and General Electric, showed that companies which actively carried out their corporate identity operations attracted employees more than others.^[13] Van Den Bosch conducted a survey across 20 big companies in Netherlands, and came to the conclusion that evaluations on visual identity increased the awareness about the elements of visual identity, and emphasized the importance of visual elements in the formation of identity.^[13] Luthesser claims that, corporate identity starts with the establishment of the corporate mission which transmits the philosophy of the institution to the participants, and emphasizes the importance of institutional mission in the formation of corporate identity.

These all about corporate identity are valid for the university as an institution. Each university constructs a corporate identity to represent its characteristics, starting from its immediate surroundings. Various means are employed in various mediums throughout this process, and what is expected is a consistent whole. While constructing its identity, a university has to be selective about many aspects, such as the position of its campus in the city, the architectural language it employs in the design of the campus, its logo, and the academic fields in its structure.

This research explores how universities construct their identities with the campus gates they employ as a surface to interact with the cities they are located in, and how the formal languages of these gates integrate the present identities and dynamics of those cities. Formal, symbolic and spatial proofs will be presented in this paper.

3. The Relationship between the University and the City, and the Gate as an Architectural Interface

"University" is defined as "an educational institution which has scientific autonomy and public entity, consisting of faculties, institutes and colleges, which practice scientific research and publishing, and which are governed by the same directorate". The word "university" in western languages originates from a word of the late Latin language, "Universitas", which means "whole, unity, community". Its recent common usage implies its character to be open to all the society, and defined as "the place / institution where all sorts of knowledge is produced and taught".^[14] Wissema explains the development of university in time throughout generations, and categorizes universities in three historical

phases: Universities of Middle Ages (the first generation), Humboldt Universities (the second generation), and the third generation universities.^[15] The institution has had its recent form in the post-industrial period, and starting from its former phases, it has developed its efforts to make the knowledge public, getting involved in increasingly complex relations with social and political contexts. Modern universities, in addition to their traditional functions such as education and research, have further national and international financial missions such as research collaborations with the private sector and licensed inventions; and these missions also have influence on their close environments.^[16] Universities now have to strengthen their relationships with the cities they locate in. In Turkey, the relationships of the universities with the cities they locate in have not been so close, since the knowledge-production function of the universities is considered to be universal and international, and the local relationships of the universities have remained in the background.^[17] Until 1950s, the universities in Turkey were built inside the cities, and many of these campuses still remain. Faculty and college buildings of many universities have been developing in urban areas, old buildings are renovated, and new buildings are erected whenever ground plots are available.^[18] The universities located in the cities become parts of the cities in city blocks accessible for urban usage. They make use of urban services; however they are always subject to reconstruction and rezoning threats.^[19] University-city relationship in its idealized form, however, cannot be observed in the universities in cities in Turkey. Most of the time, the campuses are isolated from the city with great walls which do not allow a permeability between the urban population and that of the university. One or a few gates of the campuses cannot satisfactorily integrate the university and the city, since access control points for security purposes make it worse.

The cities located out of the cities have self-sufficient campuses which include not only educational, research and operational buildings, but also buildings for all the necessary functions such as dwelling, entertainment, shopping, sports, health and recreation.^[18] Such campuses are not involved in the urban life and traffic outside campus. They are closer to nature. They generate their interior commune, and the social ideas are reflected in the physical planning of their microcosmic cities, i.e. their campuses. The idea of campus, applied in USA first, stems from the "castrum" of the middle ages, and it is defined as "repeating units in a unified order, and formation of the whole consistent with the basic idea, with the development of such units".^[20] The most appropriate location for a university campus is the immediate outskirts of the urban areas.

University, in his opinion, should integrate with its environment in such a way that open spaces of the campuses must be accessible by the public, and the dormitories should be in cottage system, not in the form of military barracks.^[19]

In both types, the expectance is an organic relationship with the university and the city, however, the outcome has always been a form of mutual exclusion, which limited the contact between the university and the city physically occur at the campus gates only. The campus gates in Turkey have been considered solely as surfaces for passage, and designed accordingly, while it is possible to imagine them as peripheral organs. The only concern about the university gates how it looks when it is observed from the city, and how it would represent the identity of the university.

It is also necessary to review how "gate" has been read as a cultural code. From Seljukian period on, "gate" has always been a means of magnificence and show off. In Pakalın's paper, the Ottoman uses of the Arabic word for gate, i.e. "bab", in noun phrases are explored in order to show the variety of symbols the word has been related: Bâb-ı âli (The grand gate), Bâbu'ssaâde (the gate of felicity), Bâb-ı Hümâyun (imperial gate), Bâbu'sselâm (the gate of welcoming), Bâb-ı şerif (the gate of Mevlana's tomb), Bâb-hükümet (the gate of the government), Bâb-ı devlet (the gate of the state), Bâb-ı fetva (the gate of the grand judge), Bâb-ı seraskeî (the gate of military), Bâb-ı ahiret (the gate of the afterlife), Bâb-ı selâmet (the gate of salvation), Bâb-ı cihad (the gate of war), Bâb-ı ül ebvâp (the gate of the gates), Bâb-ı ullah (the gate of god), Bâb mahkemesi (the gate of the court), Bâb-ı inayet (the gate of mercy)^[21] The border gates separating the neighboring countries from each other, the city gates that serve as the entrance to cities, the gates of the middle age castles with drawbridges, fully ornamented crown gates of historical buildings, ceremonial gates of the governors with military guards, the gates located on the holy routes of the temples, victory gates after wars are all the examples which have symbolic values besides their functions, and they add up to the concept of gate in the culture.^[22] The famous ceremonial gates of the Topkapı Palace are greatly valuable in this sense.

The university as a symbol of education and knowledge seems to have isolated itself from the outer world by the use of its gate. In our country, the seminal example might be the gate of Beyazıt Campus of İstanbul University as a significant architectural image. This campus had been used as a military campus, and the gate was built in 1827 in a different form than its recent form. Its present form was built in 1864. After İstanbul University was established, the gate became the unique element of identity rep-

resentation for the university. In most of the discussions on universities, science and education, the front façade of the gate facing Beyazıt Square, i.e. its face towards the city, has been used as an image. This may be one of the reasons why universities made use of their gates facing the cities as their representations traditionally.

4. Gates of Universities in Turkey as Tools of Identity Representation

Besides their basic function, i.e. as passages between the city and the campus, and as an interface, the university gates have been used to construct their identity. Universities designed their gates considering the characteristics of the cities they are located in, their institutional characteristics, and the geographical characteristics of their region; and the way the city would perceive them has been a crucial concern in the designs of these gates. The examples in this paper are not chosen in a chronological order. The university gates bearing similar characteristics are grouped and categorized according to the revealing concepts. The resulting picture shows that many gate designs had similar concerns, although identity emphasizes uniqueness. It should be noted that there are many aspects in design and construction processes of these gates that we cannot discuss here in the limits of this paper, such as the costs, administrative problems, qualified designers and so on. In the scope of this paper, the aim was to sketch out a general panorama.

The motivations of the universities in Turkey while designing their gates as identity representation tools are categorized into four groups:

- (1) Local references
- (2) Free-floating historicity
- (3) Geometric / Stylistic Experiments
- (4) Place/ ments: Spatialized Gates

These sub-topics were generated by discussing the similarities of the grouping samples. These similarities are; common architectural elements, structural aspects, symbolic references and relationship with context. Aesthetic judgment was avoided, and an objective perspective was attempted.

4.1 Local References

The parallelism between the identity of the city and that of university was often observed in the examples. Especially the universities established in Anatolia designed their gates with obvious direct or transformed references to the identity of the city they are located in.

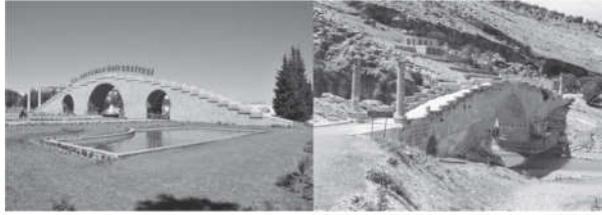


Figure 1. The Gate of Adiyaman University and the Cendere Bridge in Adiyaman

Usually, the architectural objects in the cultural heritage of the related city were analogically transformed into a gate, and the outcome had an effect that the observer enters into an institution which is a continuous part of the city.



Figure 2. The Gate of the Harran University and Historical Houses of Harran



Figure 3. The Gate of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University and Historical Houses of Rize

As can be seen in the images above, some formal characteristics or architectural details in the historical textures of the cities were either directly copied or transformed, with an aim of material and formal similarity.



Figure 4. University of Ahi Evran and Cacabey Mosque in Kırşehir

From these preferences in the representation, it may be claimed that these universities as educational institutions relate knowledge with locality, and seek their identity in their roots. However, since they either copied or directly used the local forms, their perspective seems to be formalist and two dimensional. In some examples, the forms of gates present in the historical texture were used in an updated design, and the outcomes were far-fetched formal contradictions.

4.2 Free-floating Historicity

Another common tendency observed in the examples is the use of total historicism as a perspective to relate with the local. These universities, rather than making use of local historical images, designed their gates as historical collages in which forms, ornamentations, and organizations were used to refer to historicity in general. Rather than clear local references to a place or to a city, a monumental effect was aimed, similar to that of the gate of Istanbul University.



Figure 5. The Gate of Altınkoza University



Figure 6. The Gate of Kütahya Dumlupınar University

Some examples formally represent an artificial historicity while they also attempt to integrate the place by their spatial positioning in the city.



Figure 7. The Gate of the International Antalya University



Figure 8. The Gate of Konya Selçuk University



Figure 9. The Gate of Bayburt University

Considering the fact that the most of the examples in this category are recently established universities, the concept "free-floating historicity" is used to explore how they attribute an artificial set of roots, history and historicity to their identity. While they construct their identity in the cities they are located, they make use of images and ornamental elements regardless of the historical or geographical source of them. The outcomes turn out to be obvious examples of lack of identity. In any of these examples, one can change any historical element with another one from an entirely different period, and the result would not change at all. While these institutions seem to have an identity construction strategy to appear as a well-rooted institution, the results are the opposite.

4.3 Geometric / Stylistic Experiments

Another strategy in identity representation by campus gates is to produce the gates as images independent of the characteristics of the place and the city, without any historical connection, just using the recent building methods. There are many examples in this category. While some of them attempt unique formal experiments in order to construct a catchy representation, some others simply employ repeating basic geometric forms.

4.3.1 Rational Objects

The examples in this category are mostly in Anatolia. The gates pragmatically separate the functions of pedestrian passages and vehicle passages, and employ fringes to remark the gate. The forms used include primal geometric

shapes in a non-contextual fashion. These examples simply use names and logos of the university to represent the identity of the institution.



Figure 10. The Gate of Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University



Figure 11. The Gate of Bingöl University



Figure 12. The Gate of Canik Başarı University



Figure 13. The Gate of Melikşah University

As can be seen in these examples, these gates are used as vistas that remark the spot of entrance. In most of them, horizontal and vertical forms are combined in clear geometric relations. These examples can be considered as the most diffident ones in terms of identity representation.



Figure 14. The Gate of Avrasya University

4.3.2 Formal Quests

A part of the gates, which are designed independent from the city and the history attempt to reconstruct the perception of the university by employing new forms. The present context is generally ignored, and the gates become attention-grabbing autonomous architectural objects. Some universities used their corporate logos as the point of departure for the spatial design of the gates. This attempt seems to aim at sustaining the corporate identity.



Figure 15. The Gate of Gümüşhane University



Figure 16. The Gate of Muğla University

What is common in this category is the variety of materials and colours. A further study would show whether the local materials were used in the construction of these gates or not. Considering their existence in the city, the aim of the gates in this category seems to be abstraction, non-contextuality, and production of an attention-grabbing image.



Figure 17. The Gate of Nevşehir University



Figure 18. The Gate of Karabük University



Figure 19. The Gate of Süleyman Demirel University

4.4 Place/ment: Spatialized Gates

Some of the examples in this research manage to transform their relation with the city to an architectural and spatial formation. In these examples, in contrast with all the above, the gates are not considered as two-dimensional passage surfaces and the representation of institutional identity is not designed as surface graphics. The function of entrance in these examples, expand into a spatialized design. Especially in the award-winning projects in the national architecture competition for the gate of Davutpaşa Campus of Yıldız Technical University, the relationship of the gates with their place and the city makes them much more than simple passages.

Another common point in all these projects is that the project images depict an expansive, dynamic and wider entrance processes while all of them became much simpler when they were built. This means that in theory some attempts exist to enhance the relations between the city and the university, however practically the old tendencies overcome these attempts.



Figure 20. The Digital Image from the Project of the Gate of Ordu University



Figure 21. Project for the Gate of Çankırı Karatekin University

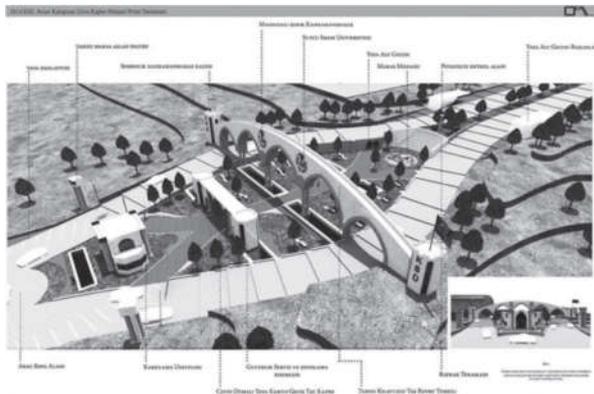


Figure 22. The Project Proposal for the Gate of Sütçü İmam University

As in other examples, some university gates mind about their location, and attempt to reorganize and redefine that place spatially with their existence. Some of them are located at the border with the city, and they open new spaces for city functions, while the structures of some others make their surroundings more defined environments. The award-winning projects of the competitions mentioned

above all had similar concerns, and they attempted to transform their place rather than being a solely visual representation of the university. These gates, formed by an expansion of the fringe and belonging to neither the university nor the city, can be imagined as the potential starting point of the idealized relationship between the university and the city. These spaces have the potential to organize the identity of the related institution.



Figure 23. The Gate of Pamukkale University



Figure 24. The Gate of Uludağ University



Figure 25. The Gate of Abdullah Gül University



Figure 26. Award Winning Projects in the Competition for the Gate of Davutpaşa Campus, Yıldız Technical University

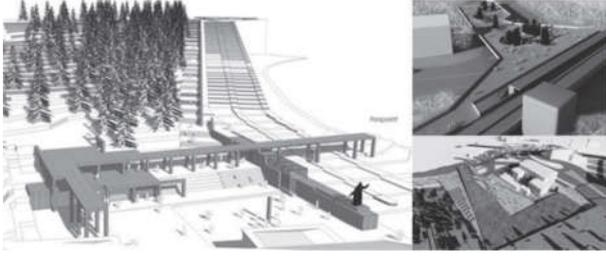


Figure 27. Award Winning Projects in the Competition for the Gate of Davutpaşa Campus, Yıldız Technical University

5. Conclusion

All the examples analysed in this paper, and the ones which were included in an initial categorization show that universities in Turkey attach importance to their gates since the gate is the very spot where the tension and interaction between the city and the university takes place. The gate is also the platform on which the institutional identity representation, integration to the city and seeking for a privileged position continue and become materialized. With the use of various methods and intentions, almost all university gates become important because of their function of facing the city; hence their design and construction are elaborated. In most of the examples, campus gates are not considered as architectural elements, their potential not realized, so that they remain as simple intersections of passage. The infertile connection between the city and the university is sustained in these examples which could not manage to be spatialized. Universities are not completely independent of the cities they locate in, and their basic function should be to produce and spread information and knowledge. This is the reason why the architectural problem of the campus gate should be questioned further, so that universities would be able to produce them as new spaces of interaction with the city rather than sole identity representation tools.

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