

Psychogeographic Analysis of Campus Design: Spatial Appropriation via Walking Practice in the Cases of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University and Ankara Middle East Technical University in Turkey

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Abstract : Street is not only a crucial spatial unit in urban design and planning discipline but also the context of walking practice in urban space. Moreover, psychogeography concentrates on both 'walking' and, therefore, the differentiated forms of (urban) streets to examine the influence of the built environment on the feelings and attitudes of human beings. This paper focuses on 'walking practice' in university campuses with reference to spatial appropriation forms via a psychogeographic lens on the phenomenon of alle in two different cities of Turkey, Ankara, the capital city, and Van, in the eastern part of the country. Alle, as an extension of 'street' in university campuses, is the constructive spatial structure in university campuses, and as a result, it should be the (both physical and mental) spine of design policy while conceiving and constructing a university campus. The main question of the paper is: How does the interrelation of 'campus design' and 'walking practice' on alle penetrate reciprocally on the spatial representations of citizens within their urban daily lives. The body contacts with and at urban space (with other objects and subjects) via its movements and stops; this interaction occurs through the spatial pattern of occupancy and vacancy. Walking practice leads to a set of cognitive mental representations in relation to the repertoire of place attachment and spatial appropriation. University campuses are autonomous and fruitful urban spaces to investigate such an interaction. There are both physical/real and psychogeographic representations of the same urban spaces and urban spatial practices. This separation would indicate the invisible dimensions of the difference between 'what is conceived' and 'what is perceived.' This study aims to compare and contrast the role of alle in both campus design and spatial appropriation via walking at two differentiated university campuses by collecting the mental representations, doing in-depth interviews, and attending walks with the interviewees by psychogeographic techniques. Campus design and spatial appropriation will be compared [with reference to the conception and perception of alle] in three scales: (1) the historical spatial development stories and design approaches of university campuses, (2) the spatial pattern of campuses on the basis of alle, and (3) sub-behavioral regions of the alle in campuses in relation with mental representations and psychogeographic attentive walks. The sub-questions of the research are: [1] How and why do the design approaches differentiate in two university campuses in Turkey, [2] How the interrelation among alle design and spatial appropriation differs in these two cases, and [3] What do the differentiated gaps among real and psychographic maps indicate about the design and spatial appropriation interrelation. METU, as a well-designed, readable campus with its alle, promise a rich walking practice with in-depth and fruitful spatial appropriation regions; however, Van YYÜ limits both the practice and place attachment with its partial design with an alle which is later added to the campus. This research both displays the role of alle in the campus design, walking practice and spatial appropriation and opens a new methodological path to discover hidden knowledge within urban spaces.

Keywords : alle, campus design, cognitive geography, psychogeography, spatial appropriation, Turkey

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