

Shaping Public Consciousness

City Miniature of a fully Public Vertical Campus

AR3AP100 Public Building Graduation Studio 2023-2024
The Vertical Campus | A Public Hub of the Future in The Hague

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1. Introduction and Problem Statement

University Buildings play complex roles as public buildings. They provide a space for their primary goal of teaching, learning, and research to transfer knowledge while also contributing as a public space for interaction within the university and community and further with the society of the host city.¹ The spatial configuration and relationship between the campuses and the city changed over time as the number of students increased and the city's morphology developed. Peter Larkham, an urban morphologist, mentioned the universities as 'extensive land-holding' space that directly relates to 'urban type' in morphology.² Larkham stated that the choice of university building location holds significance for symbolic and practical reasons, including inner and outer activity patterns.³ As the learning space on the campus includes not only closed classrooms and laboratories but also outdoor areas for transdisciplinary cross-fertilization, the sense of sharing public spatial configuration gives strong co-dependency between the university and the host city.

Culture and Science Minister Robbert Dijkgraaf mentioned that the Netherlands suffers from university capacity issues⁴ with overcrowded lecture halls, lack of tutoring space for teaching, and high work pressure among staff⁵ which caused limitations in providing full-quality pedagogy. This acute shortage of facilities and infrastructure is pushing universities to continuously construct new campus buildings⁶ to extend their campus and fulfill the demand for higher education. Nevertheless, the active campus buildings during the day differ significantly from the evening. As there are no lectures and tutoring sessions, and students tend to wrap up their 'student time' and enjoy their daily lives in the evenings, crowded campus buildings suddenly become quiet and empty. The sense of publicness becomes an inaccessible, inactive space. Thus, ironically, the buildings constructed to fulfill the high demand turn out a vacant lots at different times of the day and go off-duty of being 'public buildings'. Under co-dependent relationships between the education campus and the metropolitan city, satisfying the public for various users as an academic building is challenging.

The Public Building Graduation Studio focuses on blending vertical hybrid university buildings into the Hague's fast-growing center. Notably, the Hague has been described as the Netherlands' 'de facto' capital⁷, where the parliament and all the ministries are located. With the development of high-rise morphology, the center of the Hague started densifying with thin, vertical towers. However, these clusters of office buildings, housing blocks, and cultural institutions' high-rise spatial configurations are receiving harsh criticism of the architecture in the Netherlands becoming "notably boring".⁸ Betsky also pointed out that the design of high-rises in the Netherlands shows a lack of consideration of the city's character, just adding formative functions⁹ repetitively. This ignorance of the cities' spatial

1. Berna Yaylali-Yildiz, Bas Spierings and Ela Çil, "Exploring the Effects of Spatial and Social Segregation in University Campuses, IZTECH as a Case Study." *Urban Design International* 19, no. 2 (October 9, 2013): 125-43.

2. Peter J. Larkham, "Institutions and Urban Form: The Example of Universities." *Urban Morphology* 4, no. 2 (2000): 63-77.

3. Ibid

4. ICEF. "Dutch Government Asks Universities to Suspend Active International Recruitment amid Capacity Concerns." *ICEF Monitor - Market Intelligence for International Student Recruitment*, (2023).

5. Ibid

6. Dispatch, "Students Protest Lack of Staff and Facilities at Amsterdam University," *Peoples Dispatch*, October 17, 2022, <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2022/10/17/students-protest-lack-of-staff-and-facilities-at-amsterdam-university/>.

7. David Kaufmann, *Varieties of Capital Cities*. (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018).

8. Aaron Betsky, "Architecture in the Netherlands Has Become Notably Boring." *Dezeen*, October 23, 2023. <https://www.dezeen.com/2023/10/23/architecture-netherlands-boring-aaron-betsky/>.

9. Ibid

configuration eventually started to reflect on the quality of the public space and experimentation. The element of connecting people and the city is not only just the facades or material, but is to grasp as a single entity with network. As Pimlott states "The character of the network is bounded to its experience: its dimensions and proportions, its qualities under ones's feet and hands... its way of making those bodies and minds conscious of each other... to be."¹⁰

10. Mark Pimiott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project*, 2016. <https://research.tudelft.nl/en/publications/the-public-interior-as-idea-and-project>.

2. Research Aim

Public space literature contains an increasing body of research examining the spatial relationship between universities' and cities' social aspects of public spaces. Nevertheless, there is still a relative lack of studies exploring how university campuses, as a place, contribute to the formation of publicness in the city.¹¹ This study aims to investigate how the actual publicness forms in the vertical university buildings and the role played by the hybrid functions in the university building influence the publicness to the city itself.

Research Qesiton:

How can a **fully public vertical campus** influence the **public spatial configuration** in the city center of the Hague?

Sub-Research Questions:

- How does the gradual transition between the inner and outer of public domain from the vertical campus impact the urban fabric?
- How does hybrid public building influence the social interactions within their neighborhoods in high-density urban areas?
- How does the architectural design of a vertical campus impact academic users' behavior?
- What are the architectural elements of a public building that can enhance or influence foster community engagement and inclusivity?

11. Berna Yaylali-Yildiz, Bas Spierings and Ela Çil, "The Spatial Configuration and Publicness of the University Campus: Interaction, Discovery, and Display on De Uithof in Utrecht." *Urban Design International* 27, no. 1 (2020): 80-94.

3. Methodology

The methodology will take a qualitative approach, including theoretical, contextual, and design approaches.

Theoretical Approach

This research is related to the spatialization of the vertical university campus's public realm and its experience. Campuses and students bring culture, lifestyle, and youth cohorts to their host cities and help the city tackle different societal or economic challenges.¹² In return, cities respond to the needs of students and staff by providing diverse open services, convenient transportation, and leisure activities. Numerous literature studies on how the public sphere is manifested in universities reveal similarities: social practices are assumed to be the primary aspect of **interaction, display, and discovery of publicness** in both city and campus perspectives.¹³ In this research, an intensive literature review will be done on the publicness of university campuses under these three core attributes.

Contextual Approach

The data collection method involved extensive academic research for the larger database to analyze and apprehend. The secondary data will be obtained from an intensive literature review by different authors. Reports from the municipality of Den Haags, old news articles, and the Den Haag archive planning documents will be used to comprehend the Hague's historical background, spatial conditions, and transformation progress.

The evaluation criteria for the vertical education building requires not only a building database but also an observation of personal opinions and experiences of the high-rise education building. This study will employ a qualitative research approach to gain primary perspectives and insights into the dynamics of vertical campus designs within urban contexts. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders, including students, residents, and government office employees on the site, to obtain diverse preferences and experiences of the public configuration on the site.

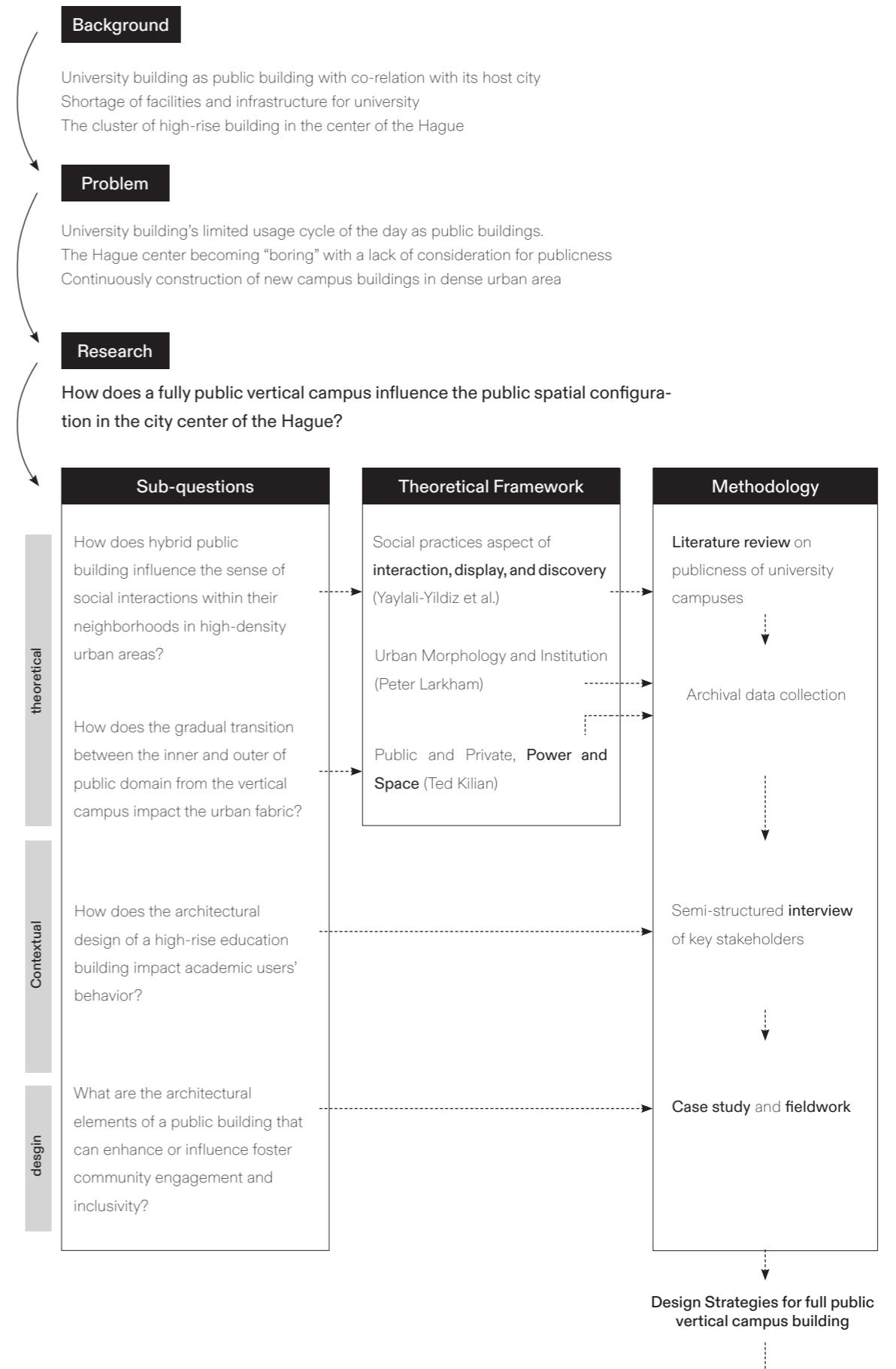
Design Approach

This research will accompany the selection of case studies that will serve as the basis for the investigation, enabling an examination of the campus's role and conditions to the city and its users. Each case study will be chosen to represent different aspects, such as public accessibility and circulation, education-community interaction, and sustainability initiatives, and a comparative analysis will be carried out to explore critical approaches and methods they used. Moreover, field studies will be done in diverse cities, including London, Oxford, Amsterdam, Delft, and Eindhoven, demonstrating the various approaches to the spatial configuration of the university campuses in their host cities. The research will thoroughly examine architectural plans, spatial layouts, design philosophies, sustainability practices, and the overall impact of these high-rise campuses on their respective urban environments.

12. Alexandra Den Heijer, *Managing the University Campus: Information to Support Real Estate Decisions*, (Eburon Uitgeverij B.V., 2011).

13. Yaylali-Yildiz, Spierings and Çil, "The Spatial Configuration and Publicness of the University Campus: Interaction, Discovery, and Display on De Uithof in Utrecht." 80–94.

Research Diagram



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