

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Greta Samulionyte
Student number	5851270

Studio		
Name / Theme	Design of the Urban Fabric	
Main mentor	Ir. Leo van den Burg	Section of Urban Design, Department of Urbanism, TU Delft.
Second mentor	Dr. Juliana E. Goncalves	Section of Spatial Planning and Strategy, Department of Urbanism, TU Delft.
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>Originally, my goal was to explore the creation of therapeutic public spaces in Lithuania, a country deeply affected by the trauma of Russian occupation. I planned to utilize design not only as an analytical tool but also as a means of effective communication with stakeholders. Despite evolving project dynamics, these initial intentions persist. The project now delves into the realm of public space through a strategy focused on renovating building stock, aiming to address multiple scales. The overarching theme of the studio, "Embracing Plurality – growing porosity," aligns seamlessly with the project. It connects the physical environment with the psychological aspects of trauma, intending to craft a tool for citizen participation. Whether considering my initial ideas or my current ones, I remain convinced that Urban Fabrics is the most fitting studio for this endeavor.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	<p>Fostering trauma recovery through citizen participation Rejuvenating the Post-War Building Renovation in Alytus, Lithuania</p>
Goal	
Location:	Alytus, Lithuania
The posed problem,	Twelve years after the initial publishing of the book on collective trauma in Lithuania, the book

called "Ką ji mums padarė?" (eng. *What have they done to us?*) is being republished. Specifically, individuals born during the Soviet period and in the early years of independence express a keen interest in understanding the past (Gailienė, 2021). Even though a healthy cultural identity in Lithuania has not been restored yet, the war in Ukraine has triggered collective memories, sparking a positive wave of exploration into our past (Gailienė, 2019).

However, the internal compass, which is your internal sense of guidance or intuition shaped by your upbringing, shaped by the Soviet occupation in Lithuanians has yet to adjust to contemporary times. Persistent mistrust in state institutions and the challenge of finding common ground, not only among local citizens but also in the built environment, remain prevalent (Giedraitytė et al., 2022). EU policies exert pressure on renovating building stock constructed before 1993, presenting a significant task for the country. A task where citizens of the blocks have to cooperate with institutional stakeholders, the ones they do not trust nor see to look positively at from any perspective.

The existing citizen participation process related to renovation has been unattractive, with many expressing reluctance due to negative examples and communication gaps. Understanding the impact of collective trauma on individuals is crucial, as trauma not only influences how we interact with our environments, bodies, and brains but also hinders our ability to engage in activities like envisioning an alternative future (Kolk, 2014). There is a lack of awareness regarding how trauma has disrupted everyday life and routines for many.

We find ourselves at a time where Lithuania is confronted with the grand task of renovating a significant portion of its building stock. This undertaking is so extensive that nearly every resident in Lithuania is impacted, whether directly residing in one of the apartments or having acquaintances who do. The renovation process is not limited to upgrading the apartment blocks but also extends to reshaping the surrounding public areas. Consequently, it affects not only the residents of the blocks but also the overall population of the cities.

The goal of the renovation process is to actively involve citizens, not only because they are the homeowners but because they are the experts in their own environments. However, due to

	<p>prevailing mentality, some Lithuanians fail to see the meaning of participation and resist change, likewise some renovations have been done poorly, which doesn't make people feel convinced. For professionals in fields such as architecture and urban planning, this presents a remarkable opportunity to challenge and reform the participation process, steering it toward a more people-centric approach. Towards an approach that not only empowers citizens to redesign their own spaces but also, with the guidance of experts, transforms these areas into places for healing and recovery, aiming to break free from the ingrained mentality rooted in the Soviet Regime. This mentality, characterized by distrust and closed-mindedness, can be addressed as part of a broader initiative for psychological well-being and societal transformation.</p> <p>This study aims to develop a therapeutic engagement tool for individuals affected by collective trauma, specifically within the context of renovating post-war neighborhoods. The tool challenges the existing participation process, empowering individuals to navigate and articulate their past experiences, ultimately facilitating the development of proposed future plans. The overarching goal is to deepen our understanding of trauma repair through the field of urban planning, empowering citizen involvement and awareness in shaping their local environments.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>Research question How can collective trauma foster a people-centered approach towards post-war mikrorayon renovation design in Alytus, Lithuania?</p> <p>Sub-questions</p> <p>Understanding trauma</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is trauma? What is its history, definition and effects on the human individually and in a collective? 2. How does the socio-spatial environmental context influence the occurrence and perpetuation of collective trauma, especially in post-war neighborhoods? <p>Integrating Trauma to Urban Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How can existing knowledge on trauma inform the urban planning process for post-war mikrorayon renovation in Alytus?

	<p>Healing avenues - top-down / bottom-up</p> <p>4. What role can government-led initiatives play in repairing collective trauma in the context of urban planning?</p> <p>5. What is the impact of technology-driven engagement strategies on the effectiveness of trauma repair initiatives in urban planning?</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>This study aims to develop a therapeutic engagement tool for individuals affected by collective trauma, specifically within the context of renovating post-war neighborhoods. The tool challenges the existing participation process, empowering individuals to navigate and articulate their past experiences, ultimately facilitating the development of proposed future plans. The overarching goal is to deepen our understanding of trauma repair through the field of urban planning, empowering citizen involvement and awareness in shaping their local environments.</p>

[This should be formulated in such a way that the graduation project can answer these questions.
The definition of the problem has to be significant to a clearly defined area of research and design.]

Process

Method description

To answer the research question and sub-question for this project, several qualitative and quantitative methods will be used.

Literature Review

To achieve an understanding of the interlinking field of psychology and urbanism, a range of literature will be read. From books, essays, reports and articles related to the topics within the intersection and beyond. The goal is to gain an understanding and critically reflect on the presented ideas. Until P2 there was also an extinct focus on finding literature from Lithuania and internationally, in order to compare and reflect globally on what is presented locally.

Governance, stakeholder and policy analysis

As each country differs in governance systems, it is necessary to dig deep into the structure of governance, to understand the different processes that are to be found in urban development and urban planning projects. There is a particular focus on understanding the different stakeholders from the block to the state level.

Spatial analysis and multi-media review

Through fieldwork and desk analysis, a contextual research of the place will be conducted. By the use of mapping, sketching, filming and photographing it will be possible to compile an understanding of the sense of place. Likewise, the use of mixed media archival material will lay a good base to understand the development of the places and to make sense of what and why we see what we see today in the urban fabric.

Ethnography research

Through ethnographic research, with methods such as semi-structured and unstructured interviews it was possible to add an additional layer to the spatial analysis. In the initial phase of the project, I choose to do semi-structured (example, people from the block) and at times fully unstructured interviews (example, people I meet on the street, in the shop or my hairdresser). This helped me get a grip on elements that were yet too unknown for me, but natural for others, who had lived in a post-war mikrorayon for a long time. For further research, there is a wish to do more interviews with professionals within the field of psychology, not only to gain their perspectives of the interlink of their field and urbanism, but likewise to discuss the outcome of the thesis and its possible tool implementation into society.

Place-framing (Feola et al., 2023)

The method of place-framing will be used in order to understand the place through the collective memories of people. As many of the mikrorayons have not changed drastically, place-framing would be an interesting way to understand the social and temporary changes that occurred but have not grounded itself through time. This method would also provide necessary information on the citizens past, that would help in order to shape the tool through which they would form their future visions of their place.

Literature and general practical references

I will make a wide literature review, both of Lithuanian and international texts on collective trauma and related topics of the interlink of urban planning and psychology. This will be done in order to understand the missing gap of knowledge, and in order to get an fruitful understanding of existing approaches with trauma-informed planning and how it fosters citizen participation. In relation to the literature review, spatial analysis, interviews and other fieldwork will be done to understand the local aspect of trauma in Alytus, Lithuania. I will engage with psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists, perhaps other related fields, in hope of understanding what kind of tool the research can be an output of. Until now, I have gained great initial knowledge to know where I need to dig deeper, and what is no longer necessary for the research process.

Reflection

Collective trauma, societal acknowledgement and interdisciplinary implementation

This research endeavors to investigate collective trauma and its intertwining dynamics within urban planning. It seeks to determine whether recognizing trauma and facilitating individual and collective recovery can be enhanced through urban planning. This interdisciplinary gap remains largely unexplored, particularly the direct connection to collective trauma

Post-war building stock renovation

By aspiring to unearth alternative approaches for post-war building stock renovation, emphasizing a more people-centric methodology, the findings of this thesis hold immense value not only for Lithuania's long-term renovation strategies but also for other nations facing similar challenges.

War legacy

Given that Lithuania is just one of numerous countries with a history of occupation, the outcomes and processes of this thesis contribute to the body of knowledge on trauma-informed urban planning. This is especially pertinent to many former Soviet countries and, depending on the final results, may prove relevant globally for countries grappling with populations affected by war crimes.

A holistic process

Shifting the current paradigm of building stock renovation towards a people-centered approach provides citizens with a communal space for gathering, expression, and recovery. The objective is to demonstrate to citizens that they should play a more significant role in the process, fostering mutual trust and potentially encouraging open dialogue, communal gatherings, and contributions towards a harmonious existence in the mikrorayons.