Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Graduation Plan: All tracks

<table>
<tr><td>Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (<u>Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl</u>), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.</td></tr>
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The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Daniëlle Lens
Student number	4841484

Studio		
Name / Theme	Urbanism; Planning Complex Cities	
Main mentor	Dr. Caroline Newton	Spatial Planning and Strategy
Second mentor	Dr. Juliana Goncalves	Spatial Planning and Strategy
Argumentation of choice of the studio	During the first year of Urbanism I have developed a passion for research and planning, especially on behalf of marginalized groups. Whether these marginalized groups are vulnerable groups in Dutch neighbourhoods, urban villages in the Greater Bay Area or endangered animal species, together with colleagues, I developed strategies to empower and help them to improve their quality of life. In my thesis, I explore the position of Syrian status holders in Dutch towns, a vulnerable group that has very little say in their living conditions. My preferred research method is then to explore larger societal issues and the forces behind it, uncovering more and more details by zooming into a smaller scale. For this method the studio Planning Complex Cities is the most suitable. The research does not start with a specific locations. The research is used to seek places to tackle these spatial issues, formulating a strategy and principles that can be used in similar places.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Breaking (in)visible cultural walls

Goal		
Location:	Drenthe/Overijssel: specifically the towns; Dalfsen, Ommen, Hardenberg & Coevorden	
The posed problem,	In the past years, the Netherlands has become less capable of taking care of refugees coming to the country in a humane way. Reception centres are overcrowded and finding permanent housing for status	

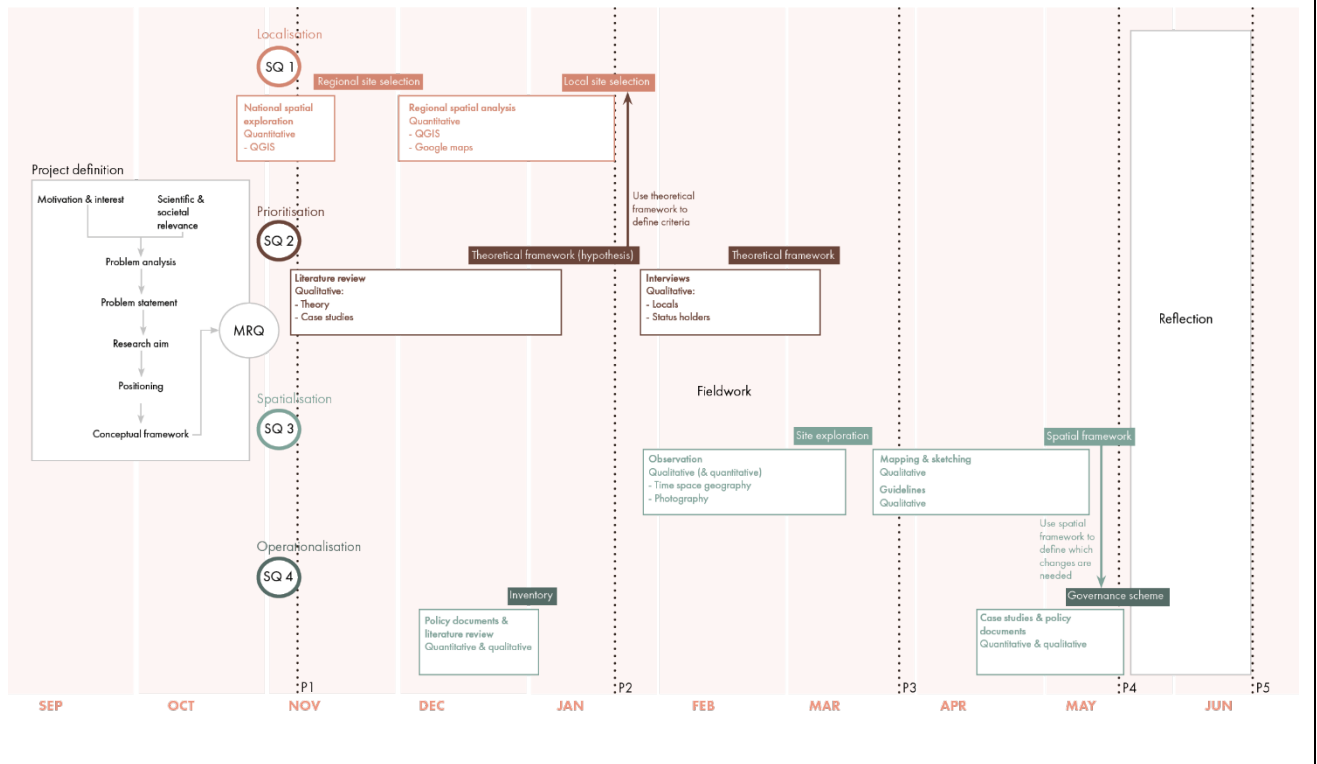|	holders, refugees who have obtained a residence permit, is becoming almost impossible.
	This is caused by the housing crisis as well as intolerance targeting especially, Muslim Middle-Eastern refugees. However, the country is facing even more challenges linked to urbanisation. People are moving away from the peripheries of the Netherlands towards the larger cities, especially young adults looking for education or a career. This has led to an ageing population in the peripheries and as a result of that, labour shortages are imminent.
	Consequently, we need to find a way to prevent further degrowth in these areas, as that will only enforce the pressure on the big cities. A simple answer could be to accommodate families from Syria, as most refugees in the Netherlands are Syrian, in these neighbourhoods, to bring back life, prevent loss of population and amenities and help the newcomers to integrate.
	Sadly, this topic is too politically sensitive. Peripherical regions tend to be more rooted in Dutch culture and more averse to other cultures. In some regions, this is visible through the dominance of populist parties like the PVV. Thus the hypothesis is that these areas are more unfamiliar with other cultures, as there is little ethnic diversity, causing the phenomena we describe as the fear of the unknown, which can out itself in intolerance, discrimination and racism.
	This results in a mismatch between spatial opportunities and socio-political conditions in the context of smaller towns in the peripheries of the Netherlands. Simultaneously, refugees feel unwanted and struggle with integrating into Dutch society, causing a clash, instigated by (in)visible cultural walls between the different groups.
research questions and	How can spatial planning help to improve the *brede welvaart* for locals and Syrian status holders in peri-urban towns in the Netherlands?
	SQ1: Where in the Netherlands is the potential to introduce and develop the urban network between peri-urban towns?
	SQ2: What factors influence the strengthening of social capital for Syrian status holders in peri-urban towns?
	SQ3: How can space and place in peri-urban towns facilitate the strengthening of social capital?
	SQ4: Which tools and policy changes are needed to operationalize the proposed strategy?
design assignment in	The result we aim to achieve with this research is a strategic framework with spatial interventions, community initiatives and policy changes.

which these result.	- Spatial interventions: one of the results we aim to produce is an overview of spaces and places that can help to foster the solidarity between the different groups and which can stimulate the sense of belonging for Syrian status holders in the Netherlands. The overview is based on the specific site selected, but will also be useful to use on locations that are similar to the one analyzed here. - Community initiatives: places are not always sufficient to reach interaction between culturally dissimilar groups. Therefore, within the strategic framework community initiatives or events will be presented that can help to stimulate interaction and that can be kick starters of new community dynamics. - Policy changes: at the end of the research we will reflect on the current approach of the national and local government and propose alternative policies that promote the positive integration of Syrian status holders

Process

Method description

The methodology can be split up in four parts, corresponding with the research questions: localisation, prioritisation, spatialisation and operationalisation. The first two topics are aimed at creating a theoretical framework, while choosing sites that are in line with this framework. The third phase is about the fieldwork and answering the questions that arose in the theoretical framework. The last phase is used to create a strategy, including governance, to operationalize the envisioned changes. Between P4 and P5 the time is used to reflect on the results and the process.

Literature and general practical preference

The literature that forms the body of knowledge for this graduation project, addresses several relevant theoretical perspectives:

- **Urban network theory** is used to explore the opportunities within a network of towns and how the approach can help to diminish the degrowth of peripherical areas (Meijers, 2008).
- **Social capital** is used to describe what is needed in a society to decrease the intolerance between different groups. Bonding, bridging and linking social capital is used to identify the current problems when it comes to the integration of Syrian status holders (Newton, 2008).
- **Sense of belonging** is used to describe and explore how Syrian status holders attach themselves to Dutch society and how they create a new home in an unfamiliar place. The theory explores how space and place plays an important role in realizing a sense of belonging (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018).
- **Solidarity in propinquity** is used to explore how to bridge the gap between different cultures and how space is a tool to do so (Oosterlynck et al., 2017) .

Reflection

1. **What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?**

   The topic discussed in this graduation research links back to Planning Complex Cities as it looks through the different scales and the inequalities that arise from the urban distribution of resources. This project especially highlights the influence politics have on the spatial realm and how difficult these situations are to uncover. In my opinion, this also links back to urbanism in general. Urbanism is a spatial but also a political and societal practice, that involves powerful as well, less powerful members of society. Within this the urbanist plays an important role in bringing the opinion and needs of these less powerful forward to the ones who do have the power to make changes. Lastly, this is what the MSc AUBS is about to me: using the knowledge gained during the masters and the creativity we carry to bring positive changes to society as a whole.

2. **What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework**.

   Scientific & professional relevance

   This research contributes to the field of urban planning by testing theories in practice. Solidarity and a sense of belonging are important concepts contributing to this research, however, both of them are significantly politized and spatialized. Various research has already been done to discover how these concepts work in practice, by extending the research on this in different contexts, it can help to eventually verify and expand theories.

   Principles might arise that are less political and spatial and are transferable to other contexts, revealing a new strategy in housing 'newcomers' in different localities.

Societal relevance
This research contributes to viewing a 'wicked' societal problem, from another perspective.

Forced migration is an autonomous development that will continue anyhow. There will always be conflict in the world, either in terms of war, but also in terms of climate: living conditions in some parts of the world are inhuman and unbearable.

This is why we need to cope with it anyhow and the current approach in the Netherlands is not taking care of the people in need of help properly. Especially, due to the political discussion and the neo-liberal approach of the government. I think right now, instead of decreasing intolerance towards an unfamiliar culture, polarized politics increase it even further.

And here I believe that the planning perspective and the approach used in this research can help to shift this intolerance. Instead of circling around the same question over and over, new input is provided, which is not necessarily pro-immigration versus anti-immigration, but a more nuanced approach to taking care of current citizens as well as future citizens.

Sources

Huizinga, R. P., & van Hoven, B. (2018). Everyday geographies of belonging: Syrian refugee experiences in the

 Northern Netherlands. *Geoforum*, *96*, 309–317. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.09.002

Meijers, E. (2008). Stein's "Regional City" concept revisited: Critical mass and complementarity in contemporary

 urban networks. *Town Planning Review*, *79*(5), 485–506. https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.79.5.3

Newton, C. (2008). *Social Housing, Urban Policy and Social Capital: Spatial Interrelations in a Third World Context

 (Cape Town)* [PhD-dissertation]. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

Oosterlynck, S., Schuermans, N., & Loopmans, M. (2017). Beyond social capital. In *Place, Diversity and Solidarity*

 (1st ed.). Routledge.