

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

Personal information	
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Studio	
Name / Theme	Design of Urban Fabric
Teachers / tutors	Prof. ir. Riens Dijkstra, Dr. ir. SA Stephen Read, Dr. A. Arie Romein
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The last two and a half decades in Lithuania has been a transition period followed by rapid environmental, economic and social changes. In the project it is believed that physical patterns of urban development and urban form directly impacts society and vice versa. In other words the way in which urban space is designed can determine the level of social integration or segregation, inclusion or exclusion, finally success of economic development. The area of case study is rather homogeneous it was barely influenced by market forces. This is one of the main reasons to explore possible changes in an urban fabric to enhance economic and social needs in a most effective way.

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Joint Approach to Revitalise Kaunas City Centre. Exploring possibilities of Economic and Social Regeneration in the Context of Post-Socialist City Centre
Goal	
Location:	City centre, Kaunas, Lithuania
The posed problem,	Problem statement: due to socio-economic development patterns the city centre is stagnated. Changed role of the city centre together with strict heritage requirements, and lack of urban development direction led to a degrading area. This might have direct consequences for further deteriorating economic life or even shrinkage of the city. An alternative way of development in the area is necessary to ensure economic and demographic stability.
research questions and	How can development of local, small scale economy stimulate vitality and growth of activities in the city centre in the post-socialist context? Sub-questions: 1. What are emerged conflicts between socialism and capitalism led city development that are visible in an urban fabric? 2. What are the reasons and negative effects of the existing demographic changes and economic

	<p>situation to urban structure of the city?</p> <p>3. What spatial strategies are in the city centre of Kaunas and how effective they are?</p> <p>4. What are current trends and perspectives of economic development?</p> <p>5. How to make more socially and spatially inclusive structure in the city centre?</p> <p>6. How to redevelop existing structure of the city to accommodate short and long term socio-economic needs and enable development?</p>
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design assignment in which these result.	A strategy for a lively, sustainable urban structure of the city centre allowing to enhancing future economic and social changes, at the same time maintaining valuable heritage features.
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[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

The methodology involved in this thesis has emerged from both systematic and intuitive approaches. Research will provide a flexible base for the design, while design will continuously help to make a reflection and turn back to narrow down the research topic. Both will be developed parallel to each other and constantly intertwined. The findings of the research will help to validate and, accordingly adjust the hypothesis with evidences. Interviews from local stakeholders, observations, policy and real estate reports together with statistics and spatial analysis will serve as the database meant to test the hypothesis while combination between theoretical and empirical knowledge will give a clear insight into the fundamental issue.

Literature and general practical preference

List of scientific literature might be divided into three main categories. The main line and the core of theoretical framework focuses on the post-socialist cities in transition countries, particularly in the Baltic States. It helps to understand the context of this specific type of the cities, reasons of decline and emerged new urban forms in an urban structure (Stanilov, K., Musil, J.), general reasons of shrinkage (Oswal, P., Pallagst et al.,). Finally, trends of urban development and demographic changes in Lithuania (Ubarevičienė, R., Bardauskienė, D., Pakalnis, M., Stankūnienė, V., Cirtautas, M.).

Second group of theories focuses on the socio-economic trends of development in Western Europe and North America. It consists of the literature concerning new economy (Nawrotek, K., Hutton, Th. A., Scott, A. J.) as well as the critique on market profit driven planning and predictions of the socio-economic development (Piketty, T., Merrifield, A., Nawrotek, K., (case of the Baltic States)). Papers about new economy discuss how an area can be activated to accommodate economic development.

The final group is based on the studies of revitalisation of the city centre (Hutton, Th. A., Rodwell, D., Navickiene, K., Tallon, A.). Understanding of a regeneration of historical environment contributes to the story by allowing to take a distance from the study case, as a research subject and make comparisons with other cases, at the same time keeping in mind post-socialist context.

Reflection

Relevance

Recent decades an increased interest in the transition process of post-socialist cities is discussed by various scholars. According to Stanilov (2007) social evolution of Central and Eastern Europe is a perfect laboratory for exploring the relationships between market, politics, and history. It helps to

understand influence of these forces on urban fabric.

There is a number of research made about the capital cities in post-socialist countries (Tsenkova, Stanilov, 2000, Tammaru et al., 2016, Ubarevičienė and Burneika, 2015). Though the interest of the middle size cities is slowly growing, they have received much less attention from the scholars. Yet often experience even more serious problems. This graduation project aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field, specifically concentrating on urban problems of middle size post-socialist cities.

Finally, the main issues in most post-socialist cities, have experienced since the early 1990, are remarkably similar regardless of variations in the national context (Stanilov, 2007). A proposed strategy in the graduation thesis intends to offer an alternative and might become a pilot project for middle size cities in Lithuania or even the Baltic States.

Kaunas as other Eastern Europe cities is currently transforming from a compact socialist city to a modern capitalist city. The recent development of the city is concentrated on suburban expansion, investments in road network, basic infrastructure (electricity, water supply) while due to the lack of funding the rest is left in the hands of private investors, aiming higher personal profit. Often that ignores wider interest of the society. This project aims to bring focus back to the city centre, in a way to respond to a needs of a wider group of Kaunas inhabitants.

Secondly, due to strict heritage requirements and regulations, even though the city centre experience a stage of stagnation and faces economic difficulties, the city centre is harder and harder accessible to the lower class population, start-ups. The quality of building is worsening, parallel to that a number of abandon buildings are gradually growing, yet at the moment due to high heritage regulations the cost of renovation increases few times, rejecting economically vulnerable part of population. At the same time residents, entrepreneurs that are there already are gradually pushed out as they are not capable of taking proper care of the building, when eventually it become not possible to use and people are forced to move out anyway.

Time planning

