

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	Maria Symeonidi
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Planning Complex Cities	
Main mentor	Verena Balz	Spatial Planning & Strategy
Second mentor	Leo van den Burg	Urban design
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Planning Complex Cities focuses on spatial sustainable development through the scopes of spatial planning and design, as well as territorial governance. This multiscalarity and research-based approach, is important for developing substantial results for my graduation project.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	"Island(s) of exemption. Investigating spatial planning for an inclusive urban sustainable ideal within contested environments. The case of Cyprus"
Goal	
Location:	Cyprus Buffer-zone
The posed problem,	It is argued that spatial planning approaches across the continent are defined by the term territorialism due to the fact that territorial borders and state boundaries have become the spatial boundaries of the planning system. Thus, spatial planning as it is being confined within bounded territories, is not reaching its full potential as an instrument that could activate spatial integration and co-operation cross-border. Territories, are thoroughly connected with the exercise of control, sovereignty and power over space, which is something both complex and political, however, it can become even more complex and complicated in situations, where areas ore regions experience contestation based on ethnonational affiliation and disputes.

	<p>Planning in Cyprus, is an example of a contested environment where the negative use of the “conflict infrastructure” in this case the buffer-zone and the establishment of the border, affected the island as it initiated a change of the urban structure in terms of planning, economy and society.</p> <p>Consequently, spatial planning has not only being confined within territorial boundaries and state borders but it has been confined within its past and history of the conflicted situation. Through this, planning, is neglecting to foresee the contemporary and current challenges given the prolonging the territorial divide and also the positive potentials and opportunities in case of a cross-border collaborative and cooperative approach.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>How can spatial planning, address the territorial divide and social segregation in Cyprus, in order to promote urban inclusion (social, economic, environmental) towards a common sustainable urban development?</p> <p>Analysis sub-questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way, different regimes throughout the history of the conflict and the subsequent dichotomy of the island, had impacted the development of decision making in terms of planning and policy? What are the physical evidences spatially, of these different regimes and decisions? - How did “conflict infrastructure” impacted the territorial division of Cyprus? In what way this term can be a paradox? <p>Intervention (intended outcome) sub-questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can infrastructure activate change towards an urban ideal of co-operation and co-existence between the two communities? - In what way, can the establishment of a bi-communal identity restore spatial justice in situations of ethno-national conflict and particularly in the case of Cyprus? - In what way the concept “state of exception” is relevant to the case of

	<p>Cyprus and how it can impact the spatial planning approach in order to advocate co-operation and build trust between the two communities?</p> <p>Position (Scientific and Societal relevance) sub-questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Until what extent the shift from socio-spatial segregation towards a future of co-existence and co-operation, within Cyprus, can challenge the territorial approach in planning? - How can spatial planning become a diplomatic instrument towards conflict resolution, that will activate spatial integration and urban inclusion?
design assignment in which these result.	
<p>Intended outcomes (Design Assignment)</p> <p>The project aims to develop a multiscalar strategic planning framework that goes from the territorial scale of the whole island, to a more regional scale of the border and then focuses on specific urban design interventions in the local scale. The first scale, addresses the two territories and two jurisdictions of the island, the Republic of Cyprus and the unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as well as the buffer zone as a separate state under the protection of the UN. The project aims to create a common vision and strategy based on the challenges and opportunities, in respect to the both communities. Inspired by the metaphor of Faludi (2018) where he considers Europe as an Archipelago, where the countries/states are islands and the sea represents the overlapping of functional relations as well as the field of opportunities, the project perceives the two jurisdictions in Cyprus as separate "islands" and the buffer zone as the sea of opportunities to create the field for co-operation and become the motivation to achieve socio-spatial integration.</p> <p>The second scale delves more into this concept of archipelago as its focus is on the buffer zone and on the smaller communities on either side that can benefit from co-operation and collaboration within it. This scale contemplates of the fact that what if the buffer zone does not belong to either jurisdiction and has a different status and legal standing. Through is scale of the buffer-zone/regional, the concept of "state of exemption" by Giorgio Agamben (2005) as a new paradigm of government, is introduced. For Agamben, the topic of borders is related to measures taken as a result of periods of political crisis and must be understood on political and not juridical-constitutional grounds, as he states, they are paradoxes that cannot be understood by legal terms and thus the "state of exception" is the legal form of what cannot have legal form. In the case of Cyprus, the buffer zone was the result of the political crisis and invasion of 1974, so it was established as a measure to retain peace, however, currently it is not under the legal status of either states and therefore, it can be an example of a "state of exemption" that is not bound by legalities and can advocate co-operation and co-existence.</p> <p>Finally, the local/community scale, aims to investigate more on the "state of exception" of Agamben and the urban archipelago of Faludi, designing "islands of exemption" within the buffer zone, were the islands are not understood by their literal meaning but with their</p>	

figurative one. Particularly, based on the figurative meaning, communities on either side of the buffer zone are viewed as islands which can benefit from economic or environmental activities within the buffer zone for example. Initiating the change through the economy is important in order to become a motivator factor for communication and interaction between the two communities and thus in the long term, to build trust that the two larger communities need to co-inhabit the island. Thus, this project aims to develop an integrated network of islands/communities and a coherent infrastructural system than will facilitate by connecting the island's two larger communities, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, initiating a framework of co-operation and co-existence towards an urban sustainable development.

Moreover, it is important to note that while the first two scales, the territorial/island scale and the buffer-zone/regional are established, at this point of the project, P2, the last scale, local/community is not yet identified, but there are certain criteria defined following the research. The first criteria is, that the locations chosen must be in relation to the buffer zone depending on the chosen topic of focus. This does not necessarily mean that they should be within the buffer zone, however they should be in close proximity or connected in the wider zone. The second criteria is that the topic and location of the projects should benefit and be a collaborative activity between the two communities. This criterial is important not only to activate social cohesion and spatial justice, but also to create the field of opportunity for interactions between the two communities in order to build trust and rapport. Finally, the project should be defined by a grid in order to become a systematic tool and typology that can be re-produced and approach in similar cases.

Process

Method description

The thesis in general will follow the **deductive research approach**, as it will begin from a general point of view, of studying first the existing bibliography on matters such as border and territories, as well as, post conflict urbanism in relation to spatial planning within contested environments and then applying the knowledge in a particular situation, in this case, the conflict in Cyprus. The graduation project will be developed in three stages which are, the understanding of the problem field, where there will be a description of the issue, then follows a diagnosis over the topic which will be research oriented in several steps and finally a proposal for the recovery of the problem, which be the developing of a spatial planning framework.

The first stage, the **problem field** consists of the introduction of the said problem and the identification of its parameters. It is important to understand whether there is a lack of knowledge and how this project plans to improve it. The second stage of the project, is the investigation of the research problem through different lenses, **the diagnosis**, which is the process of understand the particularities of a problem field. Primary action for this stage is to research and a coherent theoretical framework that will facilitate by defining better the problem field, as well as it will introduce the objectives towards a solution. This **theoretical framework**, will be based on a **literature review**, analyzing theories from both bibliography and papers. Through, this theoretical framework's focus on the post-conflict urbanism in relations to planning and governance, the project aims to create **a conceptual framework**, that recognizes the particularities of the problem field and proposes certain possibilities to overcome it.

Simultaneously, the project introduces the **case of Cyprus** as part of the diagnosis. A **quantitative analysis** is conducted in order to collect **empirical data and information** that will structure and support the research. Through this information a **catalog** will be developed which will describe how the territorial division of Cyprus in 1974, impacted certain policies, planning decisions and different sectors. The outcomes of this research will be **mapped and visualize** with the purpose to reach reflective conclusions.

A **qualitative analysis** is conducted considering more tangible topics such as politics, culture, identity and ethics. During this step of the diagnosis, it is important to **visit the location** and engage in **interviews** with figures that have the knowledge over the topic, in order to provide more clarity through the project development. The stage of diagnosis will also include the current **Irish and Brexit debate as a case study** in order to be informed about the current discussions on borders. Both the case of Ireland and Cyprus can pose as challenges to the planning norms in terms of territoriality and cross-border relations, thus they are beneficiary to include in the research and diagnosis.

The final stage of this project, is the development of the **spatial planning framework** that will activate co-operation in contested areas in Cyprus and it will strengthen the bi-communal identity, towards a common sustainable urban development. This framework aims to develop a **multiscalar strategy** that goes from territorial/island, to regional/buffer-zone and then focuses on specific urban design interventions, that will illustrate of what this cooperation means between the two communities.

Literature and general practical preference

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Reflection

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)?

It is important for an urbanist to have a knowledge across multiple disciplines. Thus, each one of the master tracks should be relevant to my project, as in some way they are interconnected and they complement each other. *Planning Complex Cities* studios is a research-based studio which delves into spatial planning and design in order to achieve sustainable spatial development, while approaching planning through multiscalarity. These principles are the ones that I intend to follow through this graduation project. Urbanism which is my chosen master track, goes beyond the individual as, it aims to integrate the human with the natural system in order to promote a sustainable development and societal change, something that correlated with my projects aims. Through this project, the aim to establish a strategic planning framework that will facilitate by bridging the urban divides, inequalities and segregation creating an urban ideal for co-existence and co-operation between the two communities in Cyprus and activate a sustainable development which is needed in order to overcome the future challenges.

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

Scientific relevance

Both the topics of borders and contested environments, consequence to ethno-national conflict, are a pressing topic of research and theorization in the current bibliography. However, this project aims to investigate the topic these two topics in relevance to each other relating them to spatial planning and identity. Individually, the topic of borders and territory is already complex however, there is an additional complexity and complication to the cross-border regions, when these areas are related to contested environments were their separation is an

outcome of conflict between nation states. The case study of Cyprus and particularly the existence of the border, is introduced in this graduation thesis as an example of this conflicted and contested environment between two nation states. Thus, through the case of Cyprus can be illustrated as an objective for diagnosis over these situations and contribute further to the approach of a spatial analysis which builds upon knowledge on spatial development.

Moreover, in the topic of contested environments, most examples are focused on divided cities, Cyprus can pose as a case of not only a divided city but as a divided nation. In addition, the project aims to approach the topic in multiscale, not only as a tool to diagnose the situation but also as a framework for intervention. Based on the problem statement, there is a lack of coherent planning considering the wider scale. While focusing on the territorial division and history of the conflict, current opportunities and challenges are neglected. Therefore, the project aims to highlight the need for a spatial planning framework that will activate an inclusive sustainable development. In this way, it acknowledges the importance of environmental and economic stability towards an urban ideal. The scientific relevance of the project is to stress the need for collaboration, knowledge exchange and multidimensional research in order to acquire more substantial results and have a long-term impact in the transformation of a contested environment (whether that is city, region or country), towards sustainability and socio-economic resilience.

Societal relevance

When addressing contested environments and conflicting situations, it is always connected to the consequences this has to society. When ethnonational conflict is concerned, that eventually leads to spatial divide, it is unavoidable to address the topic of power, politics and democracy. Human rights are fundamental elements in the context of democracy, however, when referring to these conflicting and contested environments, these rights are violated. Both the victim and the perpetrator, during situations of conflict, feel vulnerable and affected, due to the fact that both sides face the consequences of the conflict, such as the loss of life and property. Through this graduation project the aims to address these sensitive topics and give voice to the most vulnerable population of both communities.

Moreover, with the development of a strategic planning framework, the intention is to address urban divides, inequalities and segregation not only at a spatial level but also social. What is most important in this project, is to approach planning through the lenses of identity and the sense of place, which in the case of Cyprus, it is very strong for both communities. However, what is lacking is the sense of a common identity. The current situation in Cyprus, but also in other examples of cities experiencing national conflict, is that the focus is more on what is dividing these communities, than what is connecting them. Hence, what is essential, is to focus on what can bridge these communities and restore the socio-spatial justice. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the consequences of these conflicting situations not only in space but also in society and how this, shifts through the years, becoming an on-going problem that is inherited through the generations, when not addressed appropriately.

Graduation plan scheme

		2019					2020					
		SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JUL
TRAUMA - PROBLEM FIELD	Problem Statement											
	Research Question											
	Research Methodology											
	Case Study Introduction											
	Literature Review											
DIAGNOSIS	Quantitative analysis											
	Catalog/Inventory											
	Mapping											
	Site Visit											
	Interviews											
RECOVERY - RESEARCH OUTCOMES	Case study: Ireland											
	Spatial Planning Framework											
	Multiscalar Strategy											
	Design projects											
	Conclusions											
Position - Reflection												
Reports												
				P1			P2		P3		P4	P5

Methodological Framework

