

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	Miriam Schoemakers Modrego	
Student number	4859014	

Studio		
Name / Theme	Planning Complex Cities	
Main mentor	Gregory Bracken	Spatial Planning
Second mentor	Clémentine Cottineau	Urban Studies
Third mentor	Javier San Millán Tejedor	Urban Studies
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I believe that Complex cities is the most suitable studio for my research topic, considering my approach would emphasize a regional perspective and requires a profound understanding of the policies, governance structures, and political strategies that influence these 'emptied' Spanish provinces, especially in their relation to the major urban centers of the country/regions.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Forgotten lands in the emptied Spain: <i>Allowing a systematic change for the just management of cultural heritage, natural resources and infrastructure in rural environments and agricultural territories with a Post-growth perspective.</i>

Goal	
Location:	Region of Castilla y León, Spain
The posed problem,	In Europe, there has been a general decline in rural areas in terms of population and quality of life (Plaza Gutiérrez, 2021). This project explores singular the case of Spain, which presents an interesting historical context and

an extreme case of shrinkage in the European context.

The shrinkage problem

During the 1960s, the Spanish rural areas experienced an exodus that emerged from new generations looking for better opportunities in the growing urban environments. This was an answer to policies implemented by the Spanish totalitarian regime at the time that created a decay of the economy in rural territories. The trend of shrinkage in rural environments has been constant especially since the years of the rural exodus until today. Currently, 3 of every 4 municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants are losing population. However, the general population has been growing in the past 20 years, reaching almost an increase of 15% of the population (Ros García, 2021). Moreover, the rural density was 30,2% inhabitants per km² in 2020 while the urban density was 92,8 hab/m² (Molinero Hernando, 2021). The fast growth of urban environments (progressive, dynamic) in opposition to the shrinking rural countryside (stagnant) creates an unequal distribution and, ultimately, a dichotomy of societies and divergent spaces.

Consequences of the shrinkage

This dramatically unequal distribution of population in the Spanish territories leads to other spatial and societal problems.

These problems entail poor accessibility to basic services such as food, education and healthcare, lack of diverse employment opportunities, the ageing population and loneliness epidemic, the neglect of heritage

and oblivion of culture and the environmental problems resulting from the abandonment or exploitation of productive landscapes.

The institutional dilemma

The debate about the management of rural territories and their importance in the Spanish context has re-emerged in the past decade as a result of the publication of the essay 'La España Vacía' by Sergio del Molino. This publication explained the silent decay of rural areas over the years despite the economic expansion noticeable in the rest of the country. Moreover, the social unrest resulted in a political answer to these problems, introducing activism and emergent political groups that have started to put the needs of the rural communities in the public and political eye (Figure X).

The general consensus about the political and logistical abandonment of the Spanish rural environments has mobilized the introduction of initiatives like the 'Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan' (2021) and the 'Action Plan for the Implementation of the Agenda for 2030' (2018) from the Spanish government that introduce the urgency of territorial management of rural environments (Rivas Sanz, 2022). However, they often focus on the documentation of problems and not the reactivation of these areas, answering to specific problems without a long-term perspective.

Financing from the EU and small-scale initiatives have been positive for the rural territories. However, there is a need for urbanism practices adapted to concrete rural areas that identify their heterogeneity and

	answer to the long-term needs of these territories (Rivas Sanz, 2022).
research questions and	<p>Main research question:</p> <p>How can a spatial perspective on post-growth/degrowth planning strategies contribute to reorganizing rural territories through the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage of rural communities in the Spanish countryside?</p> <p>Research subquestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the spatial perspective of post-growth/degrowth theories? and how does this translate to strategies in planning rural territories? 2. How can policies contribute to the implementation of postgrowth/degrowth principles in space management in Spanish rural territories? 3. How can the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage work as a driver for a postgrowth economy in the Spanish rural context?
design assignment in which these result.	<p>Intended outcomes</p> <p>This thesis project aims to create new knowledge about the potential relationship between post-growth theories and specific shrinking rural areas in the Spanish countryside with a perspective on spatial planning and governance. To answer this aim, three research sub-questions are answered creating specific outcomes per question.</p> <p>Outcome 1, answering sub-question 1. The specific outcome presents a toolkit with spatial strategies that relate to post-growth theories. It will work as a way of inventorying ideas that can be applied in space, specifically rural environments. This outcome could also be applicable in other locations to test post-growth strategies in further research.</p> <p>Outcome 2, answering sub-question 2. The following outcome is meant to test the previously created toolkit in the frame of specific rural territories and their governance. Through a workshop/focus group the toolkit and the ways it should or should not be applied in space will be discussed. Moreover, its relation to (spatial and ecological) heritage and culture will also be discussed in order to answer Question 3.</p>

	<p>Outcome 3, answering sub-question 3. To answer question 3 alternative methods will be used to create visual media that introduces the importance of heritage and culture in rural space. The outcome will be a gallery that presents the opportunities and weaknesses of post-growth strategies in the chosen location. The thoughts of inhabitants and decision-makers gathered for Outcome 2 in combination with the gallery will create valuable insights on how these strategies can and cannot be implemented in shrinking rural areas.</p>
Process	
Method description	
<p>The research report will be divided into three chapters that answer the research sub-questions. The combination of the outcomes through these methods will answer the main research question.</p> <p>Chapter 1 answers the first research question: What is the spatial perspective of post-growth/degrowth theories? and how does this translate to strategies in planning rural territories? and uses the following methods:</p> <p>a. Literature research</p> <p>b. Mapping</p> <p>c. Inventarisation of (spatial) strategies based on literature research</p> <p>Through a literature review, a strong knowledge of post-growth theories and strategies for spatial planning is established. This knowledge will be the foundation of the project and will be translated into general spatial strategies that will be organized and structured to create a toolkit for post-growth planning.</p> <p>Moreover, by mapping these strategies, the studied theories will acquire a spatial dimension specific to the location of interest in the Spanish countryside.</p> <p>Chapter 2 answers the following research question: How can policies contribute to the implementation of post-growth principles in space management in Spanish rural territories? and uses the method of:</p> <p>a. Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Focused on rural lifestyle and heritage and opportunities for the application of post-growth ideas in day-to-day life. · Focused on post-growth-related policies and governance <p>Through interviews that cater to different focus groups, knowledge about governance, rural lifestyles and their relation to post-growth strategies is collected. The knowledge retrieved for chapter 1 is tested by relating it to the opinions of people and decision-makers. How post-growth strategies might or might not fit in the chosen location in rural environments will be assessed as a result of these interviews.</p>	

Finally, **chapter 3** answers the question: How can the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage work as a driver for a post-growth economy in the Spanish rural context? through the methods of:

a. Media (photography and video)

b. Mapping

Through visuals, the value of tangible and ecological heritage is displayed and mapped into space in order to assess the feasibility of the introduction of post-growth strategies in today's rural society. This chapter introduces the knowledge and conclusions from chapter 2 (spatial governance, the locals' perception of heritage and lifestyle) and visualizes the space in which the designed strategies could or could not fit in.

The methods of interviews and the creation of visuals (chapters 2 and 3) will be introduced through fieldwork on location.

Through these methods the main research question will be answered, creating new knowledge on the spatial perspective on post-growth planning strategies for the preservation of the heritage of shrinking rural environments in the Spanish countryside.

Literature and general practical references

A. Post-growth theory

- Daly, H. E. (1997). *Beyond growth: The economics of sustainable development* (Nachdr.). Beacon Press.
- Durrant, D., Lamker, C., & Rydin, Y. (2023). The Potential of Post-Growth Planning: Re-Tooling the Planning Profession for Moving beyond Growth. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 24(2), 287–295.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2023.2198876>
- Lamker, C., & Dieckhoff, V. S. (2022). Becoming a post-growth planner. In F. Savini, A. Ferreira, & K. C. Von Schönfeld, *Post-Growth Planning* (1st ed., pp. 189–202). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003160984-20>
- McGreevy, S. R., Rupprecht, C. D. D., Niles, D., Wiek, A., Carolan, M., Kallis, G., Kantamaturapoj, K., Mangnus, A., Jehlička, P., Taherzadeh, O., Sahakian, M., Chabay, I., Colby, A., Vivero-Pol, J.-L., Chaudhuri, R., Spiegelberg, M., Kobayashi, M., Balázs, B., Tsuchiya, K., ... Tachikawa, M. (2022). Sustainable agrifood systems for a post-growth world. *Nature Sustainability*, 5(12), 1011–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-022-00933-5>
- Savini, F. (2022, July 11). Post-growth, degrowth, the doughnut and circular economy: A short guide. *Ontgroeï*.
<https://ontgroeï.degrowth.net/post-growth-degrowth-the-doughnut-and-circular-economy-a-short-guide/>
- Savini, F., Ferreira, A., & Von Schönfeld, K. C. (2022). *Post-Growth Planning: Cities Beyond the Market Economy* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003160984>

B. Historical context

- Barciela, C. (2010). «Guerra Civil y primer franquismo (1936-1959)» *Historia económica de España: Siglos X - XX* (1. ed. en nueva presentación). Crítica.
- Collantes, F., & Pinilla, V. (2020). *THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE DEPOPULATION OF RURAL SPAIN AND HOW IT CAN HELP US IMPROVE OUR POLICIES*. Asociación Española de Historia Económica. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.aehe.es/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/dt-aehe-2001.pdf>
- Collantes, F., & Pinilla, V. (2022). *La despoblación de la España rural: ¿Una anomalía dentro de Europa?* Sociedad Española de Historia Agraria. <https://repositori.uji.es/xmlui/handle/10234/196534>
- Davoudi, S., & Stead, D. (2002). Urban-Rural Relationships: An introduction and brief history. *Built Environment Journal*, 28(4), 269–277.
- García Monteagudo, D. (2015). *La percepción social del medio rural: Un análisis para su aplicación en el aula*. Universidad de Zaragoza.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308992222_La_percepcion_social_del_medio_rural_un_analisis_para_su_aplicacion_en_el_aula
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). (n.d.).
https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736177000&menu=resultados&idp=1254735573002
- Martín Ruiz, P. (1972). *Notas sobre el Éxodo Rural y la evolución de la población en una comarca de Tierra de Campos*.

Pinilla, V., & Sáez, L. A. (2017). *LA DESPOBLACIÓN RURAL EN ESPAÑA: GÉNESIS DE UN PROBLEMA Y POLÍTICAS INNOVADORAS*. CEDDAR. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.age-geografia.es/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/La-despoblaci%C3%B3n-rural-en-Espa%C3%B1a-CEDDAR.pdf>

Pinilla, V., & Sáez, L. A. (2021). *La despoblación rural en España características, causas e implicaciones para las políticas públicas*. Universidad de Zaragoza. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.age-geografia.es/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/La-despoblaci%C3%B3n-rural-en-Espa%C3%B1a-CEDDAR.pdf>

Ramos, E., & Romero, J. J. (2000). *Evolución y perspectiva del desarrollo rural en Europa*. Universidad de Córdoba. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/revista-48-capitulo4.pdf>

Rural. (n.d.). In Cambridge dictionary (Ed.), *Cambridge dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rural>

Tolón Becerra, A., & Lastra-Bravo, X. (2007). *Evolución del desarrollo rural en Europa y en España: Las áreas rurales de metodología LEADER*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277268519_Evolucion_del_desarrollo_rural_en_Europa_y_en_Espana_las_areas_rurales_de_metodologia_LEADER

C. Shrinkage in rural Spain

Centro de Descargas. (2023). Organismo Autónomo Centro Nacional de Información Geográfica. <https://centrodedescargas.cnig.es/CentroDescargas/catalogo.do?Serie=CAANE>

Despoblación rural: Soluciones en el marco de la agenda urbana española. (2021). Conarquitectura.

Espacios rurales y retos demográficos: Una mirada desde los territorios de despoblación. (2021). Asociación Española de Geografía. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.age-geografia.es/site/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ColoRural-2020_PONENCIAS.pdf

GEOPortal. (2023). [dataset]. <https://sig.mapama.gob.es/geoportal/>

Molinero Hernando, F. (2019). El espacio rural de España: Evolución, delimitación y clasificación. *Cuadernos Geográficos*, 58(3), 19–56. <https://doi.org/10.30827/cuadgeo.v58i3.8643>

Molino, S. del. (2016). *La España vacía: Viaje por un país que nunca fue* (Primera edición). Turner Publicaciones.

Recaño, J. (2017). *La sostenibilidad demográfica de la España vacía* (PERSPECTIVES DEMOGRÀFIQUES). Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics y Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. <http://ced.uab.es/es/>

Rivas Sanz, J. L. de las. (2022). *Paisajes menores: Patrimonio territorial y medio rural, una trayectoria investigadora*. Universidad de Valladolid, Instituto Universitario de Urbanística.

D. Governance

Callahan, K. (2007). Citizen Participation: Models and Methods. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 30(11), 1179–1196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900690701225366>

Gallent, N., & Ciaffi, D. (2014). Communities, community action and planning. In N. Gallent & D. Ciaffi (Eds.), *Community Action and Planning* (pp. 3–20). Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781447315193.ch001>

Tolón Becerra, A., & Lastra-Bravo, X. (2007). *Evolución del desarrollo rural en Europa y en España: Las áreas rurales de metodología LEADER*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277268519_Evolucion_del_desarrollo_rural_en_Europa_y_en_Espana_las_areas_rurales_de_metodologia_LEADER

E. Heritage and landscape

- Guillén-Peñafiel, R., Hernández-Carretero, A. M., & Sánchez-Martín, J. M. (2023). Intangible Heritage of the Dehesa: The Educational and Tourist Potential of Traditional Trades. *Heritage*, 6(7), 5347–5373. <https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage6070282>
- Obad Šćitaroci, M., Bojanić Obad Šćitaroci, B., & Mrđa, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Cultural Urban Heritage: Development, Learning and Landscape Strategies*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10612-6>
- Otero, I., Boada, M., Badia, A., Piqueras, S., Rodoreda, G., & Rojas, E. (2006). *Landscape history and heritage revaluation in Olzinelles valley (Montnegre, NE Spain). A socioecological approach (1851-2006)*.
- Pardo Abad, C. J. (2020). Valuation of Industrial Heritage in Terms of Sustainability: Some Cases of Tourist Reference in Spain. *Sustainability*, 12(21), 9216. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12219216>
- Quintana, D. C., Díaz-Puente, J. M., & Gallego-Moreno, F. (2022). Architectural and cultural heritage as a driver of social change in rural areas: 10 years (2009–2019) of management and recovery in Huete, a town of Cuenca, Spain. *Land Use Policy*, 115, 106017. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106017>

F. Urban-rural dichotomy

- Espacios rurales y retos demográficos: Una mirada desde los territorios de despoblación*. (2021). Asociación Española de Geografía. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.age-geografia.es/site/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ColoRural-2020_PONENCIAS.pdf
- Larrubia Vargas, R. (2015). El espacio rural. Concepto y realidad geográfica. *BAETICA. Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.24310/BAETICA.1998.v0i20.509>

G. Imaginaries, culture and identity

- Davoudi, S., Crawford, J., Raynor, R., Reid, B., Sykes, O., & Shaw, D. (2018). Policy and Practice Spatial imaginaries: Tyrannies or transformations? *Town Planning Review*, 89(2), 97–124. <https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.2018.7>
- Huovinen, A., Timonen, E., Leino, T., & Seppälä, T. (2017). Changing urban identities on a discursive map. *City, Culture and Society*, 11, 20–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2017.08.002>

Reflection

Relation between the thesis' topic and the studio Planning Complex Cities

The topic of my thesis aligns with the studio Planning Complex Cities in different ways. The problem statement focuses on the consequences of the shrinkage of a large territory on a regional scale. It relates to the values and goals of the studio as the thesis focuses on different scales and relates spatial issues to policies, (government) institutions and local communities. The main themes of the studio are 'spatial development, spatial planning, territorial governance, and participation'. Specifically, the thesis introduces these themes in order to explore the introduction of post-growth strategies in shrinking rural areas in the Spanish countryside. To achieve its goals, it examines the spatial characteristics of post-growth theory and introduces them in a specific location. In combination with a study of governance practices in relation to the same theories, the thesis presents alternatives for the organization of territories through spatial planning. An important method used during the process is the use of interviews to retrieve information from different target groups, introducing the participation element that is also included in the main themes of the studio.

Relation between the thesis' topic and the master track of Urbanism

One of the main goals of the thesis is to create a sustainable and resilient development of rural areas in Spain. It creates knowledge about the relationship between the relatively new post-growth theories and their application in shrinking areas. By examining these themes, the thesis aligns with the core values of the track related to (social and ecological) sustainability and interdisciplinary planning.

Scientific relevance

In the case of the Spanish management of rural areas in the chosen locations, there is a clear lack of unifying frameworks between actors on different governance levels. There is a need for a regional approach that will unify these territories and create an opportunity for conversation between stakeholders, some of whom are currently underrepresented in decision-making processes.

Moreover, the experimental introduction of post-growth theories in a spatial and specific shrinking rural context will provide a new perspective to the practice of spatial design in this kind of context. It allows for transferable strategies in similar locations in Europe.

Social relevance

The project's position in the wider fields of spatial planning can be strongly related to EU policies and national and local Spanish policies. It can contribute to the current methods of governance as it will propose a framework for a more collaborative approach to planning, through a new scope that is no more driven by economic growth.

The project creates new knowledge on spatial distribution, connectivity and accessibility from new perspectives that might allow for a critical view of current planning methods and a start for improved visions for these rural areas and the territories in between them.

It creates a new perspective on culture and unknown opportunities for all in the countryside. The experimental nature of this project can contribute to opening alternatives to urban lifestyles, breaking the imaginary of the 'stagnant life' in rural environments.

Professional relevance

The thesis introduces new links between the territorial organization and governance of specific shrinking rural areas and innovative post-growth theories. This new knowledge can be transferable to further research in other shrinking areas in Europe with similar characteristics.