

# 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](mailto: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	Dimitrios Trompoukis
Student number	51500485

Studio		
Name / Theme	Planning Complex Cities	
Main mentor	Lei Qu	Spatial Planning & Strategy
Second mentor	Luisa Calabrese	Urban Design
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The graduation studio <b>Planning Complex Cities</b> seems like the most logical choice to attend to. Its starting points, which are observations on disparities and conflicts concerning the distribution of spatial resources across communities and territories seem appropriate for me so as to narrow down the selection of theories and methods that I want to work on, without losing awareness of the essential challenges. During the graduation project, I am interested in applying propositions that take into consideration informal institutions and giving emphasis on community based processes. In tandem, in order to examine and develop my project in a holistic way, it is probably crucial to take into account formal institutions, such as legal and regulatory planning frameworks. I firmly believe that this studio is the most relevant one to realize these interests.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	<b>Reinventing rurality: exploring ways to revitalize Mastorochochia of Konitsa, Greece</b>
Goal	
Location:	Mastorochochia of Konitsa, Greece
The posed problem,	<p>It is evident that the greatest part of the Greek rural areas and islands is in a constant decline. This is mainly because Athens and Thessaloniki are overpopulated and concentrate most of the socio-economic capital of the country. So, most Greek peripheries end up being completely dependent on the two main cities as well as their neighbor urban centers. This situation, of course, involves the Greek mountainous mainland for which, these problems often have a survival character. Mastorochochia are such an area. They are located in the north-western part of Greece, belong in the region of Epirus and more specifically in the municipality of Konitsa and border on west with Albania. The area of Mastorochochia shows the lowest density and the highest rate of population aging (26.6%) compared to the rest of the mountainous areas of Konitsa municipality. Today, Mastorochochia face the</p>

	<p>significant problem of the shrinkage of their population. The significant lack of infrastructure, the insufficient accessibility with the urban center of Ioannina and Thessaloniki as well as the lack of solid opportunities for people to return and live there, makes almost impossible this place to be revitalized. Last but not least, despite some individual efforts that have been made for this area to be developed, this mainly happens in terms that are not favorable and fair for the local population. In other words, there is a crucial need to be revitalized and developed, emphasizing in the improvement of the quality of life of the local population and the safeguarding of the cultural heritage, including the preservation and promotion of the rich natural heritage. This can only be achieved through a holistic strategic framework, oriented towards the development of community economies promoting innovation, endogenous growth and networking.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“What kind of strategic framework could make use of the cultural heritage of Mastorochochia, in order to achieve the improvement of the quality of life as well as a sustainable and cohesive development into a neoliberal context in which Mastorochochia belong to?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Theory analysis</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SQ1.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“What are the intangible values and attributes that can make the area of Mastorochochia “count”?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Governance analysis</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SQ2.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“What is the current governance practice regarding the development of Greek mountainous areas?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SQ3.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“To what extent do the various national regulations hinder the maximum possible absorption of funding for Epirus region and its local entrepreneurs?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Socio-spatial analysis</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SQ4</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“What are the consequences of the concentration of the elderly population in Mastorochochia and the productive ages in urban centers?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SQ5</p>

*What are the spatial patterns retaining the value of mountainous life in Mastorochochia and using the advantages of village life?*

Design for the community

SQ6

*“To what extent can a mountainous, almost desolated, settlement be developed sustainable with self-sufficiency?”*

SQ7

*“What kind of actions should be promoted to reinforce the proper use of such settlements’ public space and vacant building storage by the locals?”*

SQ8

*“What alternative tools can contribute to motivate people for decentralization with a view to an as much as possible permanent habitation in Mastorochochia?”*

design assignment in which these result.

The project aims at exploring how a local knowledge community-based approach, supported by friendly governance policies, can provide a base for a locally embedded strategic framework, geared towards a fair development of Mastorochochia. Ultimate goal is to create a framework based on community economies, containing alternative approaches for spatial endogenous development, which cannot only apply to Mastorochochia, but also other isolated and non-urbanized areas.

This framework will provide a set of priorities, goals and actions aiming at motivating people and enterprises to decentralize as well as encouraging the growth of Mastorochochia, through proposals that take advantage of their regional intelligence. To achieve the creation of such a framework, a community-based design is necessary, focusing on the creation of networks of fairness, and spaces able to facilitate the existence and the development of community economies. Such economies, of course, are totally opposite to the capitalistic modus operandi in which the whole Greek economy is based on today. Thus, it is aimed Mastorochochia to be a niche and a prototype of sustainable development into the whole non-urbanized Greek mainland. The strategic framework also aims at modifying the existing hierarchy on places' development by prioritizing the local initiatives and less the initiatives coming exclusively from the state or big-scale private interests. What is more, it is important to mention that the creation of a coherent and sustainable strategic framework presupposes the creation of a long-term vision for the area.

Then, a test-design is implemented. It is about the application of the strategic framework to the physical space and, more specifically, to the settlement of Drosopigi, Mastorochochia that shows, in turn, a sufficient potential to be developed. The test design is also related to the wider area of Mastorochochia as well as the networking of the selected settlement with other strategic locations.

In tandem, alternative means of planning are proposed, as additional -but equally important- tools of the strategic framework. Due to the fact that conventional planning has usually important limitations, the need to explore alternative and more powerful ways for visualization and transmission of the knowledge and information proposed, seems crucial to be taken into account. The role of film-making can potentially play such a role. According to Ciacci (2010:177), "the language of a film, which can be generalized, simplified, evocative and emotive, rather than didactic, is perhaps the most effective way to obtain the necessary result of awareness".

## Process

### Method description

The methodology of the current project is based on the triptych: expose – propose – politicize, from “The Right to the City” (Lefebvre, 1968). It combines both qualitative and quantitative analysis, being a multi-scalar topic. In a regional level, quantitative methods are necessary to identify and validate the existence of the problem, while in a community level, qualitative methods seem to be more crucial to explore, because people’s relationships, behaviors and interactions are more important to be analyzed.

#### Identifying the problem through history – expose

In order to make such a strategic framework is crucial to “expose” the historical context, combined with a detailed analysis of the causes being responsible for the current socio-spatial disparities both in a regional and a local scale. Graphs and maps about demographics, showing the gradual movement of the population towards cities throughout the years, reveal the socio-spatial imbalance and the problematic situation of the Greek mainland.

Then, in order to be able to respond on the existing challenge about the asymmetries and dependencies shaped into the Greek territory, the contribution of a compact theory, able to guide the thesis to a concrete and completed strategy, seems crucial.

#### Finding solutions by being open and flexible in terms of scale - propose

As far as the larger scale is concerned, research is done on the extent of poverty in the region of Epirus in recent decades, compared to other regions of Greece and its metropolitan centers. Indicatively, the GDP per Capital and the level of funds -given by EU and National government- are presented per region as well as the level these funds are absorbed by the region examined.

Regarding the local scale, the municipality of Konitsa -in which Mastorochochia belong- and its spatial, social and economic contradictions are analyzed. More specifically, emphasis is given on its more isolated and deserted areas, such as Mastorochochia compared to the more developed parts of the municipality, such as Zagorochochia. In order to “propose” a strategy that will contribute to the revitalization of Mastorochochia, it is important to examine the socio-economic structures of this area, identifying the current stakeholders and the networks these create. Moreover, it is crucial to examine Mastorochochia’s topography, their spatial characteristics through tools such as mapping and swot analysis as well as by doing an on-site analysis that will contribute to the better understanding about the potential and the possible threats this area faces.

Then, emphasis should be given on the development potential of Mastorochochia. This can be implemented through alternative approaches oriented towards new types of employment. For instance, these types can be related to tourism activities, since the identity and the strong traditional character of the area could potentially allow the flourishing of tourism.

#### Intended output – politicize

As mentioned before, the first output of this project is the implementation of a strategic framework. This framework is local knowledge-based and community-based. In a regional scale, it proposes a strategy that combines policies’ assessment, goals and actions geared towards concepts like the one of community economies, while in a local scale a conceptual design proposal related to how a community economy could influence space and spatial transformations. More specifically, the thesis’ strategy aims at examining how such a strategic framework, as mentioned before, could apply to the case of Mastorochochia. In other words, it is about a framework, able to respond on the main socio-spatial challenges that this area faces throughout the years. In this project, design will be used as a vehicle to make social problems visual and spatial (‘framing’), explore possibilities and to generate solutions (Calabrese, 2020).

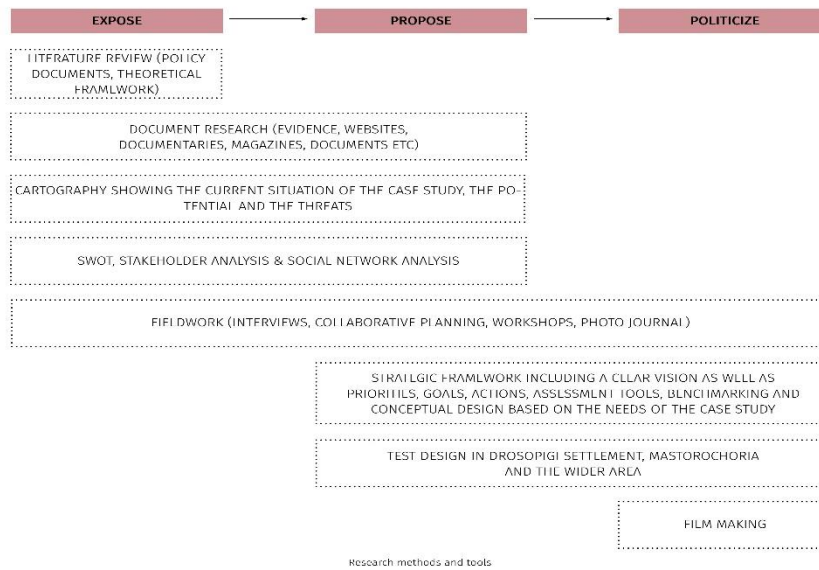
What is more, as a second output, the role of multimedia into the planning process, and more specifically of the **documentary**, can contribute not only to the creation of a compact strategic framework, but also as a tool to motivate people and various formal or informal institutions towards the revitalization of areas, like Mastorochochia.

#### Overall

The specific methods and tools used in this thesis are mainly **literature review, document research, phenomena analysis, simulation and practical applications**. What is more, through relevant tools such as

**mapping** and **cartography**, several data are collected on population density, accessibility, land uses, environmental threats and opportunities and more. Such data, combined with detailed **SWOT** and **Stakeholders analysis** might have a considerable impact for the creation of the strategic framework.

The strategic framework including, among others, a clear vision for Mastorochochia's redevelopment, also needs to include the local scale into it. To do so, tools regarding personal **interviews** with the local people and/or experts on spatial issues, **participatory workshops or discussions** as well as the extensive **use of multimedia** in order to show and highlight the current situation, seem to be crucial.



## Literature and general practical preference

Literature on the current project plays a crucial role and a significant condition for the implementation of a holistic and sustainable strategy. Initially, a generic review of the academic paper is made, in which the importance of the immeasurable values for the development of a non-urbanized place like Mastorochochia is stressed. Then, the second section of the theoretical framework tries to identify ways in order to convert the theoretical character of the first section to more practical ideas and solutions that can potentially have a strong spatial impact on the case study. The concepts of degrowth and community economies are analyzed showing the possibility to apply such theories to the physical space. In addition to this, two case studies with similar characteristics with the thesis' one are mentioned. These case studies have followed alternative ways of spatial development, being harmonized with the theories, mentioned before. The role of these case studies is for benchmarking with this thesis' topic. Finally, on the last section of the theoretical framework, reference is made on the special role and the significance that alternative media, like the one of film making, may have into the planning practice.

Furthermore, due to the fact that the area of Mastorochochia considers an almost abandoned and quite isolated location, the collection of information and data is often very difficult. Thus, the implementation of interviews with related stakeholders is of a great importance, because it often works as the main tool of information that can lead, in turn, to interesting conclusions. Below, the main literature references as well as the personal interviews that have been implemented so far are shown:

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### **Interviews**

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### **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 department of Urbanism positions itself at the intersection of different core themes of the faculty. The combination of urban design, landscape architecture, and spatial planning builds up on crucial factors for sustainable development. The character of the current project is based on the same characteristics. First of all, it needs to think and design most of the time in different scales, as the core of the project is itself multidimensional. Moreover, the graduation studio Planning Complex Cities focuses on processes of contemporary urban growth. My thesis tries to understand and, then, analyze these processes in order to examine the possibility of revitalizing areas that are not currently developed, are not located in the suburbs of

urban fabrics (but they are still dependent with them) and, mostly, in order to develop them in a diametrically opposite way to the one of urban centers.

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

### Scientific relevance

Nowadays, a lot of places tend not to be the same important as others -the most urbanized places are considered to be the most important ones-, in terms of socio-economic development and spatial coherence. This is an outcome, of course, of many factors throughout the years. Several planners and geographers explain that the spatial fragmentation which leads to the sentence just mentioned, derives -to a great extent- from the current socio-economic model (Lamprianidis & Bella, 2004; Kassimis et al., 2003).

Regarding the case of Greece, the majority of the researchers confirms that the imbalance and asymmetries arising from the existing spatial fragmentation, not only negatively affect the peripheries themselves, but also the neighbor cities or even the whole country. It is also mentioned that there has been a trend for decentralization during the first decade of the 20th century, but it was not capable of radically changing the dynamics of the Greek mainland (Iliopoulou & Stratakis, 2011).

Furthermore, it is noticed that even though several EU and national programs funding the peripheries in a regular basis, the results are not the desirable ones. In other words, there should be a turn to alternative, and more radical approaches of spatial development for such places. For instance, the emphasis on the elements that characterize and make unique these areas should be prioritized and promoted (Pose, 2018).

In tandem, except for aiming at achieving the development of these areas, it is also crucial to aim at the sustainability of this development. The creation and the application of a socio-economic model, oriented to participatory mechanisms and focused on the advantages of the examined areas is important. According to Gibson-Graham et al (2015), the need for communities and people to turn into diverse economies and alternative spatial models of development should be dominant. The implementation of a strategic framework about underprivileged communities like Mastorochoia, geared towards community economies is crucial, too. In such a framework all stakeholders should participate actively in favor of the development of the area through directly democratic processes and in a constant sense of responsibility and solidarity towards the community itself (Gibson-Graham et al, 2015).

### Societal and ethical relevance

The societal relevance of the research initially derives from the personal interest about the gradual abandonment of the Greek mainland, combined with the hyper-concentration of people in cities. It is about an acutely politicized phenomenon, as the current categorization of places based on -mostly- economic indicators, is creating social disparities expressed in the rural, intermediate and urban space. Through proposed strategies, the research will define the role of interactions for re-establishing communities of people in places almost desolated, such as the area of Mastorochoia. It worths mentioning such communities are going to operate and exist through a context of solidarity, fair economy and directly democratic processes. To achieve this, both policies and spatial interventions need to be included into the strategic framework, mentioned before.

Although the proposed research might bring significant merits, it might also pose ethical dilemmas and issues, which are mentioned here.

Promoting a strategic framework which is in total juxtaposition with the existing socio-economic context both in a local/regional scale and a national one entails plenty of difficulties. This is because, since space should not be accounted as fragmented, but as a system, interactions between places, based on different socio-economic models, can be extremely difficult to be implemented.

Furthermore, as far as the ultimate goal of this framework is concerned, being the revitalization of the mountainous underprivileged area of Mastorochoia, it can be said that it is not a simple process. This is because even if people are adequately convinced in moving to such areas, their wellbeing is not guaranteed. More specifically, even when the conditions for such a relocation are satisfying and concrete in a theoretical level, provided by the strategic framework, this is probably not enough. Specifically, the meaning of wellbeing has a dynamic and multi-factorial character that cannot totally be predicted or defined for each person individually. For instance, people's bondages with the previous place they used to live, can be a key factor in case they do not feel completely satisfied and happy with their new one. Overall, it can be stressed that despite the fact that a strategic framework should include all the possible parameters needed to achieve such a goal, it still ends up being an approaching and not a definite tool.

#### Professional relevance

On the professional field, the research aims to be added into the growing body of knowledge, that advocates for an equally distributed system of rural growth; this system should be based on the regional intelligence of the area of Mastorochochia as well as the movement of individuals, either coming from urban centers or being permanent residents of this area. In both cases, the motivations for decentralization and habitation on the non urbanized areas -and, of course, Mastorochochia-, need to incorporate strategic goals and actions, that will safeguard as much as possible a long-term and endogenous growth trajectory for them.