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:

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<th>Personal information</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Student number</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Name / Theme</strong></td>
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| **Teachers / tutors** | 1<sup>st</sup>: Maurice Harteveld  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Arie Romein  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Luiz De Carvalho Filho (PhD student) |
| **Argumentation of choice of the studio** | The fact that the graduation studio “Design of urban fabric” offers the possibility to develop and test research by design is one of the most attractive elements that it offers. Further, the total freedom of choosing your own subject was important for me, as I had the possibility to investigate the subject of my own interest. Therefore, I considered the “Design of Urban Fabric” studio to be a great opportunity to provide me with insight into the topic, in which I am interested, equipping me with the skills necessary for my future career. |

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<th>The posed problem</th>
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<td>Regarding the current function of public space based on different information and literature sources, the general problem that this thesis is dealing with is the deficient function and use of the Greek public spaces as resting points. In case of Chania, in spite of the sufficient amount of public spaces it seems that the relationship between the physical environment and its users is not well-developed. Most spaces create the impression that they do not welcome all the user groups, while...</td>
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at the same time a lack of social interaction occur. This is a consequence of the limited program and opportunities that public spaces offer, since they are not planned to cover the special needs of the various social and user groups. Apart from the inappropriate design of public spaces, their current use is correlated with the extravagant privatization of public space, especially by the retail amenities of the coffee and food culture, the absence of people in existing officially defined public spaces or/and the ghettoization of certain places.

Hence, the general problem this thesis is dealing with is the problematic use and poor quality of the existing public staying spaces in Chania. Many of them are extreme privatized, causing problems of accessibility and walkability, while others are not used at all or used by specific social groups developing urban voids or ghettos in the city. This existing defective Greek reality results in social exclusion and poor social interaction among different demographics, questioning the serving of needs of the different users.

**Research questions**

Relied mainly on the problem statement, the main research question this graduation thesis will answer through research and design is the following:

Which spatial interventions can improve the quality and reinforce the appropriation of public staying spaces, including the different user groups in Chania, based on their socio-cultural background and needs?

**Sub research questions**

In order to answer the main research question, a set of sub-research questions needed. The sub-research questions which are going to be answered are the following:

a. How is the term public space defined in the present thesis?

b. Which parameters can influence the appropriation and the quality of public space in the Greek context? How can these parameters be converted into urban form?

c. Which user groups does the present thesis take into consideration? What are the needs of the different user groups in correlation to the use of public space?

d. Which parts of the public network of Chania are publicly-used? Which of them do serve the needs of which user group and which should be improved?

e. Which are the spatial characteristics and patterns that can translate the needs and desires of the various user groups into an inclusive and attractive urban environment?

f. How can the socio-cultural background of Greek people be related to the physical form of public space and influence its design?
### Design assignment in which these result

After defining the criteria for an attractive and qualitative public space according to the Greek data, design patterns are determined by combining them. But as the approach with the design patterns may lead to generic solutions, a balance between research and design is attempted. In other words, not only design patterns are set based on the literature, but also by starting to design the testing locations of the city, new ideas about patterns come up. As far as the testing locations are concerned, after the social and spatial analysis 5 existing public spaces are selected. Regarding the characterization based on the problem statement triptych map, the five public spaces belong to four different categories and, so they need different approach in the design. Apart from the spatial interventions in each of them, a network between them will be designed. Although the multi scalar approach is interesting and helpful, in Greece it is difficult to start an intervention from the city scale. So, by proposing solutions in square scale, a stimulus is given for further interventions, which gradually can be extended in the city center scale and afterwards in the whole city.

### Process

**Method description**

In order the main research question and sub-research questions to be answered several methods will be used and combined. Namely, a) literature review, b) interviews, c) observations, d) mapping, e) successful Greek examples f) online survey, probably g) a workshop and in the end h) the patterns. The different methods alone or in combination will be the guidelines to the whole process, leading in conclusions which will be catalysts for the design proposal.

Having as starting point the motivation of the project, a try to define the overall problem statement and the main research question was made. Therefore, problem statement and the research question are two parts of the thesis that are highly interrelated to each other. In order to answer the main research question, the sub-research questions are divided in those of the research and those of the design. For both parts, the methodology is consisted of two principal parts, the literature review and the location-based analysis or location-based solutions. But, except for these two, the Greek successful examples are a third way to contribute partly to the answers of some sub-research questions.

The literature review contains firstly the definition of public space (sub-Q a), the parameters for the appropriation and quality of public space (sub-Q b), the correlation between the needs of users and public space (sub-Q c) and partly the patterns for inclusive and attractive public spaces (sub-Q e). This forms mainly the theoretical direction of the project, which will be transformed into design progressively through the pattern language. Even though most of the literature review is not for Chania or Greece generally, a connection with it is attempted via the location-based analysis. The literature can support the location analysis by giving an exact direction able to illustrate parts of the problem statement more clearly.

As for the location based analysis is divided also in two parts, the spatial analysis – tracing, mapping- and the social analysis – interviews, observations, online survey -.
The spatial analysis will provide information about the existing built environment: the land uses, the physical form and organization of the existing defined public spaces, their qualities and problems. The social analysis on the other hand will present the social features around the defined public spaces: the user groups, their needs, when and in which way they use the space and the opinions of local people about public space. Almost all this information will be illustrated in a spatial way, so as to be the possibility of merging the two dimensions and understand if the two affect each other. Specifically, it is important to understand in which level the form, the organization and the physical characteristics of the public spaces and the surrounding area contribute to its attractiveness and inclusiveness.

**Literature and general practical preference**


Reflection

Socio-scientific Relevance

Public space and public life are subjects that have concerned and still concern many researchers from different disciplines, since the value of public space in the everyday life of the inhabitants is really important. According to the research project commissioned under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Public Spaces Programme, “Public spaces play a vital role in the social and economic life of communities” In that context, the gradual degradation of public spaces can affect both the urban environment and the social life of citizens. Nowadays and especially during a recession period not all the inhabitants of cities benefit from the existing public spaces. There are social groups with limited access to them, regarding physical, economical or interest-oriented dimension. Many parts of the city are considered inapproachable, undesirable and unsafe, contributing to social exclusion, poor social interaction, stigmatization, moderate level of safety and low quality of public or/ and private amenities. In that sense, although urbanism is a discipline which cannot touch deeply economic and social issues, it can provide alternatives and solutions for improvements based on social, cultural and economic notions. It is in urbanists' hands to reveal new approaches for public life no matter how difficult and complex some subjects maybe. Especially in Greece, which first established the notion of democratic public space with the ancient agora and Greek polis to be significant prototypes of public space, the underutilization of public spaces does not only affect the social and economic life of cities and their citizens, but also the cultural and historical identity of the country. Greece is a country that was under the domination of many different invaders for many years and its citizens tried to reinforce their communal life and social cohesion through public spaces. So, public space was always an integral part of Greek people's life. Via the use of public space Greek people bind with each other, with their culture and history in difficult time periods, a fact that is in danger of becoming extinct due to the modern conditions of public space in Greece. Although, some attempts towards the activation of public space started the last decades, especially in big cities, the problematic use of it is still present. Thus, a new more exact research on the topic may shed some light on the issue. Exploring the social and spatial reinforcement of public space in relation to the socio-cultural background and needs of Greek people, taking into consideration existing conflicts between public and private space, can contribute to Greek cities regaining their democratic public space in terms of the modern society.