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Planning Complex Cities is a MSc Urbanism graduation studio at the Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology. Graduations combine knowledge from the fields of planning and design for a built environment that is appreciated by many, in a democratic and open society. For more information, see <https://complexcitiesstudio.org/>



Locations of Planning Complex Cities graduation projects since 2010 (2020/21 in black)

Wednesday,
28 October 2020,
9.00 - 12.45

SESSION 1

<https://tudelft.zoom.us/j/95779564893>

9.00

DIVYA GUNNAM

Loiter City - Spatial strategies to redefine a woman's place in a public realm

Bangalore, India

Gender is a highly context-specific social construct. It explores the social relationships between men and women, a relationship in which women have been systematically subordinated (Oakley 1972). The way gender relations are defined broadly influence the conceptualisation of space and place. In a patriarchy like India, where gender inequality is deeply rooted in its culture and history, this disparity lends itself to the realm of space-making as well. Even though women account for almost half of India's population, they are still considered vulnerable and marginalised. They still have difficulty fostering an amicable relationship with the public realm which was predominantly created and served for men. They are often met with hostility, cultural taboos, violence and an exclusionary environment that doesn't account for or recognise their complex needs.

This project deals with the inequalities between gender and focuses on the spatial dimension of this inequality trying to locate socio-spatial justice through an Indian perspective. Through this project, we try to understand culturally constructed social structures, behaviour patterns, relationships between people and the built environment. The project explores spatial justice through gender-sensitive city planning and by giving agency and ownership to women towards the cities they inhabit.

9.45

JOHNATHAN SUBENDRAN

Geographies of Conflict - Towards liberation, self-determination and spatial justice in Sri Lanka's North East

North-Eastern, Sri Lanka

This research project aims to understand the spatial and procedural implications of planning and spatial justice in conditions of oppressive power and conflict. Ambitions towards spatial justice amongst marginalized ethnic minority populations are at further risk if liberal notions of government and planning continue to operate under the ethnocratic state regime. This demands an alternative approach and perspectives that are context-specific to which can engage with the realities of marginalized populations towards the quest for justice. The research framework is steered by an exploratory research approach that suggests an organic process to contextualize the preconditions of spatial justice as the research begins to unveil the conditions of the context of marginalized areas of North-Eastern Sri Lanka. The project intends to formulate spatial strategies and procedural guidelines to support the quest for spatial justice, self-determination, and liberation of marginalized populations.

10.30

SIMON BOHUN

Polarized Vienna - Exploring the relation between public space and social cohesion in post-suburban areas

Vienna, Austria

Political opinions in Vienna are increasingly polarized in spatially distinct patterns. Election results show that the inner-city population predominantly supports cosmopolitan and green strategies. Outer areas, on the other hand, have a distinctly higher share of voters for right-wing populist parties. This phenomenon can be observed in many European cities, but the Viennese context is particularly interesting since Vienna is frequently ranked as the city with the highest quality of life and is famous for strong social policies.

This project will research how political discontent in suburban areas

correlates with spatial structures and processes. Furthermore, it will investigate how different social groups in suburban areas experience the current development of their environment. The aim is to understand the socio-spatial differences between urban and suburban areas, that promote the polarization, and to propose strategies to reduce this imbalance.

11.15

MAUD EBBERS

(Re)claim public space - Two strikes against living at disadvantage
Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Social unrest represents governmental discourse. Dissatisfaction among residents implies a dissatisfied government. Political measurements - handing money, giving resources and applying experiments - are not the way to deal with challenging areas. Challenging problem areas like these can be found in many cities distributed over several countries. Challenging and incoherent, for its build eclecticism and resident's wealth, that's Bospolder-Tussendijken. Social qualities are unstable as represented by a weak ability to self-sustain and strong ability to cooperate. Spatial qualities are inadequate as there is a lack of maintaining (semi-)public space, which causes unrest. Is help - with greater goal of self-esteem, while re-education is key - in right hands of Dutch governance? This thesis aims at true cross-understanding of stakeholders, by embracing a socio-spatial apparatus with which potential opportunities will be encouraged. This can help to transform the vicious cycle of unrest and with that a reclaimed public space for all perspectives involved.

12.00

ZHE HOU

#Amsterdam after 6 pm: Towards a diverse and balanced night-time economy

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Amsterdam is famous for its inclusive and prosperous night-time economy. However, the agglomeration of the nightlife industry in the city centre of Amsterdam results in a rise in noise, crime and antisocial behaviour, which triggers a backlash from residents. Gentrification, as a current approach by the municipality, has mitigated the negative externalities of the night-time economy to an extent, but also caused massive closures of nightlife venues. This research aims to save the diversity of nightlife in a context of cultural displacement by transferring the night-time industry from the city centre of Amsterdam to the suburban vacant lands. The research attempts to explore integrated strategies and multi-scale interventions to enhance the liveability of inner city, promote the development of suburban vacant land, and contribute to a diverse and balanced night-time economy.

Wednesday,
28 October 2020,
13.30 - 17.15

SESSION 2

<https://tudelft.zoom.us/j/96202084061>

13.30

YIZHAO DU

Bridging "historic" to "energetic" - Towards a young life for an old city in the context of marginalization

Han Dan, China

Han Dan, a city which with more than 6,000 years history, is eclipsed over recent years. Although there are various opportunities for the city to take, such as a brilliant historical culture, rich tourism resources, and convenient transportation, Han Dan chose an unsustainable way for rapid development, which relied on the steel and coal mining industries, since early 1950s. In the early 20th century, a national strategy called "tui er jin san" (an industrial transition strategy which means declining the secondary industries, and transfer development focus into the tertiary industries) was promoted nationally in order to achieve better sustainability. Many factories were shut down, talent and labour started floating out to the big cities around Handan. With the vigorous development of these big cities, the "attractive effect" becomes more and more serious, and the marginalization is getting worse and worse. Based on this situation, this project is aiming at designing a young-people friendly metropolitan environment for Handan city by introducing strategies to improve city attractiveness in the process of urban regeneration, and by enhancing integration with the national mega-region system.

14.15

DIMITRIOS TROMPOUKIS

Re-inventing rurality: Exploring ways to revitalize the Greek mountainous mainland

Epirus Region, Greece

This thesis deals with the question about how people coming from degraded regions of Greece can get involve through a community-based approach to contribute to the regional endogenous development of these areas. In the first chapters, research is done on the factors that led to the integral movement of the population from the countryside to the cities. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the social, economic and spatial characteristics of Epirus region, compared to other Greek regions. Then, the case study of the mountainous villages' complex, titled Mastorochoia, is analysed. Following the analysis, the thesis proposes an alternative assessment and planning framework, geared towards ways that can achieve the revitalization of areas, such as Mastorochoia, in a more sustainable way. A community-based design, oriented to promote concepts, such as the fair economy and the maintenance of the cultural identity of such areas, is the upper goal of this project. The thesis project is completed with the implementation of a short ethnographic documentary, showing the existing situation, as well as it presents alternative forms and examples of rural development, based on fair economy.

15.00

JACKSON GATHANGA

Cities for Nomads - Advocating for decentralized urban development in Kenya through a review of the cultural-economic migration patterns of Nairobi urbanites

Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi, like many other major African cities, is characterized by urban primacy, highly rooted in its historical colonial context, where it is three to four times larger than the country's second largest city. Similarly, it faces rapid urbanization, increasing inequality and poverty, and a burgeoning and vulnerable urban youth population who constitute majority of the population. Despite this, it continues to attract an increasing population of

rural-urban migrants who are in search of the opportunities and benefits afforded by urban areas. A closer look at the social-economic lifestyle of a large group of Nairobi urbanites reveals a strong link between urban and rural areas which can be attributed to social-economic circular migration patterns. By closely evaluating these patterns and the everyday socio-economic settings of Nairobi urbanites, this project will seek to investigate these migratory socio-economic patterns that establish connective socio-spatial patterns between the rural and urban areas. Consequently, it will evaluate how these patterns can be leveraged against currently practised neo-liberal urban development models in the region, to advocate for a more sustainable system of decentralized urban development that caters to the needs of a rapidly growing urban population.

15.45

YANGZI LI

Towards a more socio-culturally sustainable and old future - Exploration on the pathway of urban regeneration in the inner city of Chengdu, China, focused on the sustainability of the socio-cultural identity of the city.

Chengdu, China

The ongoing TOD practice, including the fast construction of metro lines and stations, is one of the strategies that have been taken in the past decade in Chengdu city, a national centre city in the west of China with a population of almost 20 million. The intensity with which metro stations are being and were built will trigger massive and fast urban regeneration in the inner city, which is already fully developed. This trend of spatial changes can also cause changes for the existing socio-cultural identity of Chengdu city. The city's characteristics and the local lifestyle could gradually fade away, due to the future fast urban regeneration, if the issues are not properly and proactively approached. The projective of this research is to find possible solutions to build an integrated decision-making model for future urban regeneration in the inner city of Chengdu, focusing on the sustainability of the city's characteristics and the local lifestyle.

16.30

LUKAS KULIKAUSKAS

Vilnius in process - Towards efficient citizens engagement, or: The emergence of civil society in stagnating socialistic neighbourhoods in Vilnius

Vilnius, Lithuania

In the last 10-20 years Lithuania's society development rating, democracy level and economy changed drastically. New initiatives of civil society have been emerging, as well as new active communities, that are interested in city development and their environment. The governance moved towards open, transparent, liberal and more inclusive city management. However, differently than old-town, down-town or even some industrial districts in Vilnius, socialistic districts, which accommodate about 60 percent of citizens, have not yet been adapted to these forms of management, and do therefore not reflect their success in today's life of their inhabitants.

I would like to analyse the existing city governance, management methods, as well as current and possible future societal development processes in Vilnius, in order to find the best possible ways in which these two poles can play together. The aim of the project is to identify positive changes in spatial conditions in socialistic districts, as well as the aspects in which these districts can be a place for improvement of civil society, governance and community. My expected outcome of the design project is an efficient and attractive scheme and method for the coproduction of stagnating post-socialist districts by civil society, locals, and government, adapted to the specificities of Vilnius.

Thursday,
29 October 2020,
9.00 - 12.45

SESSION 3

<https://tudelft.zoom.us/j/98649267345>

9.00

YAQI WANG

Metropolitan virus - A strategic planning for addressing global immediate pandemic by improving regional resilience through the experience of COVID-19 in MRA

Metropolitan Region Amsterdam, Netherlands

When measured in terms of concentration of population and economy, metropolitan regions are the most developed and globalized areas in the world, which also exposed them to various global emergency crisis, like a pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out from Wuhan (China) at the end of 2019, presents a perfect case and opportunity to investigate and improve the vulnerability of metropolitan regions to highly contagious global diseases. This project concerns a research-oriented design of a post-pandemic vision for the Metropolitan Region Amsterdam (MRA). The main problem is that MRA is vulnerable to the pandemic due to a vicious cycle of urban vulnerability, which has been exposed and intensified by the hazard of COVID-19. The basic reason is related to its attachment to global flows aimed at continuous economic growth. Therefore, this project is aiming at spatial and political strategies through the new economic model of Doughnut economics to improve urban resilience facing the pandemic in the post-COVID MRA.

9.45

CHRISTIAAN HANSE

The relevance of in-between - Repositioning the role of the urban and peri-urban of the Dutch Flanders region into the larger transition of the Scheldt Delta region.

Dutch Flanders, Netherlands

The region of Dutch Flanders is facing several challenges related to regional imbalances and perception of decline. It is located in between the Scheldt river estuary and the region of Flanders in Belgium which is providing unique opportunities, but also causing frictions and risk. Its peri-urban and urban areas under pressure are located in between the large scale activities in industry, agriculture and port logistics. These large-scale activities have multiscalar relations, connections and forms of cooperation to which the urban and peri-urban do not seem to be as well connected to. At the same time, the larger functional region of the Scheldt Delta is in need of transition because of economic, environmental and technological changes. The in-between areas could benefit by repositioning their economic, social and environmental role into the larger functional transition of the Scheldt Delta. This study aims to develop a strategy for this regional development as well as developing a policy framework for improving the cross-border relations and opportunities to guide the transition of the Scheldt Delta region.

10.30

KARLOU WESTERBEEK

Transforming a city of walls into a city for all – A development strategy to reunite the urban core with the metropolitan region of Grand Paris

Paris, France

Throughout history Paris has always been a divided and fragmented city, constantly redefining its boundaries. The rapid (post-war) urbanization and the increase in car ownership have enclosed the historical urban core in a maze of residential areas and major infrastructure. This infrastructure is meant to connect places, but the elements function moreover as a mobility bottleneck and local disruptor. Another observation is that socio-spatial inequalities are increasing in the region. Tensions among inhabitants have led to confrontations, riots and a feeling of exclusion and dissatisfaction. Together with the current urban policies, the large-

scale infrastructure strengthens the socio-spatial inequalities and the feeling of exclusion. The Grand Paris development plan aims at reducing these inequalities, but still has economic growth and international competitiveness as main objectives. The plan is focused on large state-led public transportation projects, but presents no statement towards the actual exclusion mechanisms: the large-scale car infrastructure. The aim of this project is to critically revise the prevalent exclusion mechanisms, to reveal the spatial possibilities for the redevelopment of car infrastructure and to recommend institutional change in order to create a just, equal and well-connected region.

11.15

YUJIA LIU

Vibrant old community – Participative approach as a tool to promote old community redevelopment in Chengdu, China

Chengdu, China

Chengdu is experiencing rapid development, and the urban area is sprawling to the south and east, leaving many old communities in the north abandoned. Most of those old communities are built before the 1980s. The aging built environment, and spatial structure cannot meet the increasing need of people anymore. The current large-scale urban regeneration focusing on demolition and reconstruction was not implemented well in some communities. To solve these problems, this project aims to explore a planning strategy in collaboration with the government, the citizens, and other public and private sectors, to promote the old community redevelopment. During this process, the locals' voices will be heard, and they will be an essential part of the redevelopment implementation. A series of guidelines and toolbox for the community redevelopment will also be proposed and applied in several typical public and semi-public spaces to test if it works well.

12.00

JORT VAN DEN BROEK

Structural Change - Exploring planning tools to relieve public housing in Greater London.

London, United Kingdom

Neoliberal planning started a process of financialization of housing and privatisation of property, which turned housing from a good to a financial asset. The processes caused a housing crisis in London. Values of land and housing prices skyrocketed ever since causing a depletion of public housing. London has become a fragmented and unequal city, with an unbalanced governance. Powerful private investors take away the voice of the local, low income class residents. To recover the right to the city for all residents and to reduce inequality, a shift has to be made to relieve public housing. Structural Change intends to find tools to reevaluate public housing itself and explore alternative ways to offer affordable housing. The strategy aims to contribute to recovering the right to the city for all residents and reducing inequality, transforming London from a fragmented to an inclusive city

Thursday,
29 October 2020,
13.30 - 16.30

SESSION 4

<https://tudelft.zoom.us/j/94940819413>

13.30

YIXIANG HUANG

Beyond informality - Exploring strategies for redeveloping the informal settlements in Guangzhou (China)

Guangzhou, China

In China, the phenomenon of informal settlements is a consequence of rapid urbanization. Since the 1980s, the construction of labor-intensive industries has accelerated the expansion of urban areas. Villages at the fringe of the city were surrounded by newly built urban areas and became the so-called "urban village". The governance program sets up restrictions for villagers to get access to public service and the redistribution market in the city, which leads to the inequality and segregation between the informal settlements and other urban areas. As survival strategies, informal constructions and informal economic activities have been booming in the villages, which also raised problems of overcrowding and unsafety. The project intends to understand the current issue within its socio-economic context, and explore the potentials of upgrading the industrial model as a trigger to redevelop the informal settlements.

14.15

CHEN GAO

Water justice in the peri-urban contexts - The intervention framework of water equity in Dujiangyan water conservation area

Dujiangyan, China

With the explosive growing population in Chengdu, the demand for urban drinking water is increasing, and the application of water conservation regulations is becoming more and more stringent. However, with the delineation of water source protection zones, villages and small counties in the upper reaches of Chengdu have been affected a lot. Metropolis gain priority on water and the indigenous people are sacrificed in the process of water resource utilization with both economic and water culture loss. Interventions that try to improve the life of indigenous people in the process of protecting water sources sometimes exacerbate this injustice. Therefore, this research is aiming to build a framework of how to measuring both physical and virtual water values, a development strategy in this peri-urban context, and feasible governance to keep the balance of different demands to pursue water justice in the Dujiangyan irrigation area.

15.00

FEDERICO RUIZ CARVAJAL

Life after fences - Deregulating gated communities' neighbourhoods in Bogotá

Bogotá, Colombia

In the early 2000's gated communities became the main growth cells of Bogotá, and in 2018 they housed 38% of the city's households. The case of social housing gated communities is especially complex, as their inhabitants, seeing homeownership as the first step in their trajectory towards middle-class, are the first enforcers of their condominiums' written and unwritten codes of conduct. Ironically, by inhibiting social interaction and cooperation, these regulations go against the dwellers' previous experiences and economic needs. This unexpected alignment of government, developers and residents defines a "static environment", where the possibility of an open and productive relationship between public and private spaces is denied. This project will explore deregulating strategies for these gated communities and their surrounding public spaces. The goal will be to make them open and adaptable for present and future conditions, shaping a new environment in which residents can become the main agents of production of social, political and economic complexity of their neighbourhoods.

GABRIELE CARADONNA

Addressing the new urban question - Developing and inclusive strategic framework for the right to the city in the peripheries of Milan through critical planning

Metropolitan city of Milan, Italy

In cities around the world, neoliberal planning policies have caused the rise of urban inequalities. Western cities are facing what Secchi calls the New Urban Question, which entails the social discrepancies that give birth to evident form of spatial injustice, together with the consequences of climate change and with the idea of mobility as one of the rights of a citizen. These social discrepancies cause exclusions that are visible in the peripheries of European cities, where the excluded groups are not able to exert their right to the city. This has different consequences as revolt movement, rise of populism and less economic prosperity. This projects aim to address the issues at stake in the urban peripheries of Milan through what Marcuse calls Critical Planning, which is composed by four steps: (1) expose, in the sense of analysing the problem, (2) propose is the phase in which, through a collaboration with those affected, actual proposal are put forward in order to achieve the desired result. (3) Politicize entails the clarification of the political action implication. At last, the disclose phase which entails the self-reflection of the planning process. This will be done through a convergent mixed methods approach which entails the incessant exchange between quantitative and qualitative design. The project should develop a strategic framework and a multiscalar design.