

# 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	Marina Fetter Brucker Liserre
Student number	5076129

Studio		
Name / Theme	Borders and Territories	
Main mentor	Marc Schoonderbeek	Architecture
Second mentor	Pierre Jennen	Building Technology
Third mentor	Stefano Milani	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Personal interest in conditions in which architecture plays important and active roles in the constitution of society, becoming entangled in complex discourses such as the topic of the studio - borders and territories.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Nomadic City
Goal	
Location:	Almaty, Kazakhstan
The posed problem,	[Problem Statement]
research questions and	[Research Question]
design assignment in which these result.	[Design Assignment]
<p>Today's societies and cities have been built upon ideals of sedentarism. This fixed, deeply rooted, conceptions of culture, identity and belonging reaffirms the organization of the world into pieces like nations, states, countries or other specific places. This may not sound alarming simply because sedentarism is so ingrained within the organization of our societies that it is readily accepted, rather invisible. But in fact, these conceptions actively territorialize cultures and belongings into physical and static spaces such as property, region and nation leading instead to questioning and frowning upon the misfits of sedentarized societies: the migrants, the nomads, those that do not belong to one place.</p> <p>A nomadic theory, as opposed to sedentarist theory, pushes thoughts to transgress borders, expand to new territories and occupy them. Architecture's understanding of societies through its settlement within the built environment is in itself a sedentarist practice (what Deleuze and Guattari would define as "reproduction science") which only reproduces sedentarist forms of living and denies a nomadic expansion of the</p>	

practice. It has maybe come to a time when architecture should incorporate nomadic theory to its practice by considering other ways of looking into society. It should “nomadize” its practice by placing itself in other territories of architectural thought, but also “nomadize” its way of perceiving society by looking at it through its moments of mobility, temporary occupations and ephemerality rather than settlement, permanence and monumentality.

How can nomadic theory and the understanding of society (and its built environment) through its moments of mobility, temporal occupation and ephemerality influence the practice of architecture?

How does it challenge current sedentarist perspectives of cultures, identities and belonging?

How can this challenge ideas of occupation of (urban) space?

How does it take accountability for more mobile lives (occupying instead of settling)?

How can it expand ideals of citizenship beyond those attached to territory?

The A2/A3 highway crosses the city of Almaty leading to the borders with China on the East and the rest of Central Asia and Europe (through Russia) on the West. This highway is the centre of very important mobilities for the country, its people, as well as migrants from the other mentioned locations. Specially important is the mobility of truck drivers carrying goods to and from China, Central Asia and Europe. An importance attributed to the fact that the transportation of goods between the mentioned locations is the basis for the current economical expansion plan of Kazakhstan.

The answer to the questions imposed above shall lead to the development of a design assignment in Almaty, that deals with places of increased transience, where different cultures and mobilities converge – like the highway –, and the challenge of place-making for these distinct mobile figures. It shall seek to address, from a nomadic perspective, the social aspect of people’s mobility – experience throughout the movement – since the government is mainly focused on the development of the basic infrastructure, such as road building.

## **Process**

### **Method description**

The research starts with a case study: the city of Almaty in Kazakhstan. In fact, the choice of the case study happened prior to the establishment of the problem statement.

This first step consists of discovering the case study and defining its qualities that make it unique. The approach used to do such thing is an analysis and sub-sequent definition

of the city's territory and borders. The goal is to develop an understanding of the area beyond that defined by its administrative borders and territory. What are the elements that actually constitute the territory of Almaty, what kind of borders exist, how are they materialized (or not) and what do they separate or define differently between them. These things are then jointly expressed in two maps: one that defines the unique characteristics of the city in terms of its territory and another that defines its unique border conditions.

The second step consists of a 2-component simultaneous research within the theme of the topics addressed by the problem statement: one results in a written paper and the other in analytical maps and drawings.

In order to practice architecture with the understandings of nomadic theory it is deemed helpful to dive into the topic by the writing of a theoretical paper in order to develop a personal understanding and positioning towards the topic. The paper addresses the dichotomy of sedentarist and nomadic theories and how they translate into the built environment through the permanence and settlement of sedentarist societies as opposed to the ephemeral and resilience of a more nomadic society.

In this other component of the research, a more specific topic within the problem statement's theme is researched within Almaty in order to address the problem statement within its specific context. Informed by the concepts developed in the theory paper, but also reciprocally informing the theory paper, this part of the research focuses on looking at the mobility of nomadic groups to gain an understanding about mobile life and occupation of different territories. It starts with a research about the original nomadic groups of Kazakhstan, most specifically the South of Kazakhstan (where Almaty is located). A parallel is then drawn to contemporary cases of nomadism in Almaty, of which the specific case chosen to be addressed are goods and passenger drivers in international transit through the territory of Almaty. In this analysis, the topics studied are the mobility of the drivers and their temporary occupations of the territories along the road. The road starts being perceived as a nomadic space – the asphalted piece of land is the axis of mobility and its extensions beyond the asphalt, places that allow temporary occupations.

Finally, the last step is the formalization of the previous part of the research into physical models. The research's conclusions and understandings are translated into 3 different models: one that conceptualizes ideas of the site (or ground), another for the form and a last one for the program. The goal with this step is to enrich the findings of the previous parts of the research as well as instigate a transition between the research phase and design phase.

## Literature and general practical preference

Augé Marc. *Non-Places*. London: Verso, 2011.

Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. 2nd ed. University of California Press, 2009.

Boyer, M. Christine. *The City of Collective Memory Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994.

Cresswell, Tim. *ON THE MOVE MOBILITY IN THE MODERN WESTERN WORLD*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A THOUSAND PLATEAUS Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 11th ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Featherstone, Mike, David Frisby, and Georg Simmel. *Simmel On Culture : Selected Writings Theory, Culture & Society*. Sage Publications, 1997.  
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(sici\)1520-6696\(199822\)34:3<325::aid-jhbs33>3.0.co;2-t](https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1520-6696(199822)34:3<325::aid-jhbs33>3.0.co;2-t).

Isin, Engin F. *Being Political Genealogies of Citizenship*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.21313/hawaii/9780824841027.001.0001>.

Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. 2nd ed. University of California Press, 2009.

Malkki, Liisa. "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees." *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992): 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1992.7.1.02a00030>.

Mehrotra, Rahul, Felipe Vera, and Jose Mayoral. *EPHEMERAL URBANISM Does Permanence Matter?* List - Laboratorio Internazionale Editoriale Sas, 2017.

Rossi, Aldo. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

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

The problem of cities, their citizens and mobilities lies in the ideology used to produce them in the first place. This ideology treats nomadic aspects of life, such as migration, ephemerality and informality as intrinsically pathological. And my project tries to validate the hypothesis that these are exactly the characteristics missing in our cities,

which are required for the creation of environments that are better accepting of "otherness", that are well resilient to rapid changes of the contemporary world and are welcoming to mobilities.