Abstract

The thesis reflects my interest and explorations into the complexity of the city of Gothenburg: the variety of people, background, cultures, urban everyday life, and the water edge. All of these aspects triggered my attention and became the framework for my thesis: to work with the water edge of the city aiming to design a public space, where multiple activities could happen by and for the citizens.

My research on the urban development of the central part of Gothenburg revealed strong tendencies of exclusion of some groups of people from the active participation in shaping and using public spaces, resulting in a shortage and a lower quality of a common ground in the city. The area of Skeppshbron, that is currently under development is a clear example of this tendencies. In my studies I encountered that the future plans for the area would lead to gentrification and exclusion instead of strengthening the possibility of a future network of public spaces.

The result of these investigations is a strategy aiming to increase the inclusive character of the public space of the waterfront in the city. An alternative plan for the area of Skeppshbron, trying to reconnect the city and the river, open and non-commercial public space for both local dwellers and citizens living at the suburbs – striving for urban diversity and flexibility, aspiring for an inclusive urban space for the city.

Therefore, a wide variety of example of activities are also suggested, and the design of the urban space concerned with making an open space for interaction and possible multiple uses, responding to the citizen’s needs, necessary to raise the quality of the public spaces and places along the water edge. In my proposal I am trying to explore what architectural conditions would allow for such a complexity of spaces for a diversity of actors and activities to occur.
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"Flows of the port city.  
Port cities build a network connecting the world. Flows of people, commodities and ideas are moving over the oceans. This contact with the world has formed Gothenburg and the history of its port. (...) The movement of people has characterized the city. Seamen, dockers, emigrants and merchants – some come to stay, others to move on."

Maritime museum's website
Gothenburg has a multicultural history—the city was founded by the Swedish king Gustav II Adolf as a port city. The port city situation has always favored cultural exchanges. It is not a new phenomenon that population of Gothenburg vary its ethnical background. Multiculturalism is part of its identity since 1621.

The map below comes from the Maritimes’ museum collection. It was drawn in early XVII century. It shows connections between Sweden and places all around the world. Those contacts were possible thanks to the Swedish East India Company—which was the largest trading company in Sweden at that time.

Nowadays, the multicultural background of the population of Gothenburg is shaped mainly by the immigrants, rather than seamen and merchants.

This lead to the study of main minorities of Gothenburg. In order to show the current situation a reverse map was drawn. The map is an answer for two questions: who are the main five groups of immigrants living in Gothenburg and how long distance they needed to cross to come here. The image shows 5 main most numerous groups, originally coming from Iraq, Iran, Finland, and terrains of the former Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia. Just one minority account for 2% of the total population of Gothenburg.
Next step was to trace where those groups are settling. The study shows that the most multicultural areas are at the suburbs of Gothenburg, while the city center remains Swedish domain. Those parts are opposites of each other. They mostly do not share common features.

In Gothenburg there are five main groups of immigrants. Every circle corresponds to each of those five groups, according to the country of origin:

- Iraq
- Iran
- Finland
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Yugoslavia

The type of the line, which creates the circle, corresponds to the number of population within a group:

- the first most populous group in the area
- the second most populous group in the area
- the third most populous group in the area
- the fourth most populous group in the area
- the fifth most populous group in the area

The biggest minorities are Iranian and Iraqi groups. In 2013 each group counted 2,2% of the entire population of Gothenburg. The second group of immigrants from Finland and Bosnian-Herzegovina (1,1% each). The amount of Yugoslavian immigrants is equal 1,2% population of the city.

The map is tracing five areas of focus, representing the factor of its multiculturalism by the size of the radius of the circles.

The mapped areas:
1. Ångered (Ångered, Bergum, Gunnared)
2. Östra Göteborg (Bergslän, Kortelåva)
3. Norra Hisingen (Backa)
4. Västra Hisingen (Biskupsgränden)
5. Centrum
Research

Segregation and the districts

Proportion of population with non-Swedish background per area

The non-Swedish background does not only include the first generation of immigrants but also people born in Sweden, whose both parents are not Swedish.

The statistics—especially the data from 2010 with an old administrative division—clearly states that segregation in Gothenburg is present.

The data shows that the most diverse cultural background is visible on the outskirts of the city, while the central part remains Swedish domain. The central part does not represent the social composition of the city, neither the suburban one.

The data according to the new administrative division; years: 2010 and 2013

The data according to the old administrative division; year: 2010
Segregation and the districts

In order to reveal the conditions and possibilities offered by the public space in the city, a set of interviews was conducted. My research was considering both suburbs and the central parts of Gothenburg.

Margareta, a social worker at Idee punkten, engaged in the activities and events happening at Biskopsgården—one of the Gothenburg’s suburbs:

The events, which are gathering all the inhabitants of the city usually are concerning matters like food or flee market—basic activities familiar to everyone.

Mosis, capoeira trainer, renting a space for trainings at Culture house “200km” at Florunda:

There is not so many places to train capoeira. It will be nice to meet other people training it in other parts of the city and have a common place to practice.

Emma, an Gothenburger living in centrum:

There is any pleasant public space for younger in the center. I see many of them hanging at Nordstand without even any intention of shopping. They are just siting there or walking around with no purpose.
The urban life at the suburbs is full of diverse activities. There are many events happening in the suburbs, which are not apparent in the center. There are, for example, outdoor markets and carnivals. There are also several artists working in those areas, having very few possibilities to present their works for a wider audience.

How does the life at the outskirts look like for its inhabitants? To answer this question I am quoting the suburban dwellers. They are stating that there is a good sense of community and an opportunity to learn from each other’s cultures.

(One of those images comes with quotations. One is a photo exhibition about one of the Gothenburg’s suburbs-Hammarkullen. People from the pictures were interviewed by the photographer Jens S.Jensen. The other quotation is from a short movie produced by Nordost association to promote Northern-east suburban areas.)
To take a step back I looked at the Gothenburg’s city policies. Due to 400 years anniversary of Gothenburg establishment the municipality strives for changing the image of the city from industrial into a cultural hub.

In order to achieve that the municipality carries a debate with citizens about how do they imagine a better city and what kind of improvements does it requires. A set of meetings and surveys represent the citizens’ visions of the future development. Some of the most commonly occuring issues raised by the participants were lack of culture hubs in the center and lack of leisure activities on the river bank. Mostly the answers were emphasizing the need of developing and improving common goods, available for all inhabitants.
“Scandinavian cities were becoming increasingly multicultural, yet the consequences were generally not mentioned in the policies and plans for sustainable development.”
My research on the urban development of the central part of Gothenburg revealed strong tendencies of exclusion of some groups of people from the active participation in shaping and using public spaces, resulting in a shortage and a lower quality of a common ground in the city. The area of Skeppsbron, that is currently under development, is a clear example of this tendencies. In my studies I encountered that the future plans for the area would lead to gentrification and exclusion instead of strengthening the possibility of a future network of public spaces.

The diagram shows my study of bottom up and top down relationship. The drawing horizontally present the transformation of the Skeppsbron during the time. Verticaly, diagram represents shifting powers. Top down municipality actions and bottom up citizens engagement. The perfect situation is when the forces shaping the space are balanced. The higher the line is the more citizens are involved in shaping the public space. At the same time the destiny of the area is more relevant to the citizens’ needs.
Transformation of Skeppsbron

The possible process of change at the Skeppsbron neighborhood of Gothenburg

- Site
- City of diversity. Exploring possible strategies for the water edge of Gothenburg.
- Transformation of Skeppsbron

The level of engagement of the people in the planning process and development of the public domain

- Actors
- the Swedish shipping trade companies
- First boats on the quay: East Indian Mail and trade ship Lexington
- The closure of the Alexander Keffer's bathhouse: Investment in the buildings for shipping and transport
- Demolition of the buildings: Transformation of the railway into the cycling path of the site into a parking
- First announcement about the plans for the Skeppsbron
- First stage: building the hub for public transportation at Stangpiren
- Stage one approach: Official approval for the plan of clearing the public transport hub at Stangpiren, new tramline and light rails on the site
- Excavation of the old fortifications present on the site, even when ground-penetrating radar survey has not given indication of any objects embedded in clay or paddings—according to the reports made by the city planning department
- Start of the "Program for South River Bank"
- Official approval for stage two: consuming the plan of residential quarter, piers and a park
- Start of realization: February 2013
- Proposal of transforming the Kineska Mui restaurant into a home to artistic production and public programs
- "Create a place of artistic production, international exchange and public programs for children and adults" - translation from Göteborgs Posten article from 17th October 2013
- Research about the possible programs and activities adaptable at Skeppsbron, which will create more welcoming and attractive place
- Presenting an alternative solution for the development of public spaces on Skeppsbron: the strategy which support diversity and inclusive character of the place
- Interview with citizens living in center and at suburbs
- Starting a public discussion about the alternatives for Skeppsbron
- If the case rise no inform more people processes exclustin from the network's space in the city, like radio of press

- Actors
- merchants, ship' crews
- Liu Wanchun
- Architects, city planners, investors, officials

- Impact of the bottom-up actions
- The level of engagement of the people in the planning process and development of the public domain

- Impact of the top-down actions
- Influx of people from all around the world, increase in the number of population, the beginning of the first industrial revolution in Sweden, international exchange of goods
**Transformation of Skeppsbron**

**Site**

**Top down**

Approach to the harbor area at Skeppsbron neighborhood.

**Second stage: transformation of the bay and building 7-8 housing complex**

**Impact of flooding**

The perfect situation is when the decisive voice about development of the city lies in hands of citizens and municipality is altering the plans including all the inhabitants in the process of transformation.

**Bottom up**

Strategy: act as if park would already existed.
Site

**Top down strategy**

Nowadays the development of Skeppsbron is mainly driven by economical advantages from the taken decisions. The social, cultural and enviromental factors are neglected.

In order to trace possible reasons why certain actions were taken I have folowed the main actors involved in the change. Then it becomes clear that the current transformation leads to exclusion of the spot from the chain of public spaces. The heterogenity of the space was caused by the decisions taken by the heterogeneous group of people: the actors represents mainly Swedish middle class. It leads my investigation to another groups of actors, who might be intrested in utilizing the space and simultaneously create interesting heterogenity.

My intention was to change the space at Skeppsbron into more public, complementary and balanced by making it welcoming and appealing for all citizens. This type of intervention leading to the extension of the open public spaces is highly needed in the cities like Gothenburg, where we can observe a shortage of those kind of places.

Municipalities' plans:
The new development is focused now on implementing the communication hub, hotels, housing units, restaurants, and a landfill in order to create the peers. The transformation is conducted in two phases, illustrated by the diagram.
- first row of images represents the situation before the changes
- second row of pictures explains the first phase. The site is currently under construction. The focus is placed on implementation a new ferry station at Stenpiren and tram and bus hub nearby. The bus line is moved from the bank of the river towards the city.
- the second part of transformation includes construction of new exclusive housing units with restaurants and shops at the bottom floor. The parking boat will be moved. The extension of the shoreline will be executed by filling the water with the ground. It might be problematic in the area already under the flooding risk.
- due to the global warming and general raise of water the area might be completely flooded within 200 years. The last images represents possible scenario.

Colours on the bar refers to the colours on the diagram and place those images on the imeline of the reansformation of the site.
By conducting interviews and observations I was exploring the diversity of people with different backgrounds and cultures. Very often artists are active in one of the suburbs and are not apparent in other districts of the city. I believe that providing them common ground to present their work in the city center could tie different parts of the city together.
Site

**Actors and programs**

Following the different groups of people and associations I have noticed that currently suggested program do not respond to the needs of the people. Therefore I have accumulated the programs which might be appealing for a wider scope of citizens. I believe that the Skeppsbron area have a capability to host all of them and even more. Not all the usage of the public place can be overseen well in advance. That is why the spaces giving the conditions for many activities works like catalysts for things to happen.

In order to rise citizens’ interest in the site I have planned three strategies to attract them. The first is to introduce the programs already popular in other parts of the city. Second is to expand and support suggestions and visions for this site made by an activist. The third one is to add programs which are possible to carried on once the conditions for the previous activities are created.

To collect the data I have conducted a set of visits to popular public spaces, culture houses, local libraries and by observing people spending their time. The observations were carried in Gothenburg.

At the following page I have merged the set of programs for Skeppsbron with already registered in Gothenburgs’ media cases. The programs conducted at Skeppsbron as I have planned would strengthen already happening events.
Site

Actors and Programmes

The Scandinavian largest film event, taking place annually in Gothenburg. Film För Fred was also active during the last festival in 2013.

Film festival organised completely by Film För Fred, promoting young amateurs both actors and directors.

World wide known music festival ‘Way Out West’ appeals both artists and fans from different parts of the world. At the same time the festival promotes the city.

Graffiti under a bridge at Värviöderstoget in Biskopsgården. The graphics were design by the student from the local high school.

Meeting with the painter Saber Alinah

Meeting with the artist Ollio

An activist, co-founder of ICIA. She is an activist, who by her initiatives tries to change the image of Gothenburg from industrial city into the culture hub.

Author of both abstract and figurative paintings, working with aquarelle and acryl; Saber Alinah was leading the project of creating the mosaics for the new meeting point in Hammarkullen.

Jonathan Ollio Josefsson, also known as graffiti artist Ollio, is presenting a set of his works “Transformation” in the showroom in Hammarkullen. This is his first exhibition in the art showroom.
This map shows that Skeppsbron is in a very central part of Gothenburg. The close proximity to the river is its main asset.
To understand the urban context I conducted a set of analysis.

In terms of programs and activities the main meeting and culture hubs oscillate around Brunnsparken and Järntorget. The area becomes more homogenous towards the water. The Skeppsbron area, now underutilized, is far from taking advantage from its potential.
Natural conditions

The natural topography around Skeppsbron isolate the site from the rest of the city. There is also a green belt nearby with a commonly used walking path. The part of the belt along the channel is visible on the map. It continues up and around the old city walls, and stops just at the river bank.

Communication layer

In contrary, the site is a very well connected by the public transportation with the rest of the city. In a walking distance there are main communication hubs like: Brunnsparken, Kungsportplatsen and Järntorget.
City of diversity. Exploring possible strategies for the water edge of Gothenburg.
Site
Urban analyzes
URBAN LANDSCAPE / ARCHITECTURAL PROPOSAL
The result of these investigations is a strategy aiming to increase the inclusive character of the public space of the waterfront in the city. An alternative plan for the area of Skeppsbron, trying to reconnect the city and the river, open and non-commercial public space for both local dwellers and citizens living at the suburbs – striving for urban diversity and flexibility, aspiring for an inclusive urban space for the city.

My architectural response to the presented situation is a spatial appropriation of the introduced area. I would like to create conditions supporting generosity of the public space at Skeppsbron. My design is a structure which expands the usable riverfront. The main characteristic of the expansion is that created peers are design to be partly flooded. The hourly fluctuation of the river’s level covers the structure more or less with the water during the day. Thanks to that it is possible to observe constantly changing shoreline. There is also a part of the structure which always remains above the flooded area. Some of the ever-dry parts are fixed while the over are floating and rising with the water level. In contrary to steep embankment-present now on the side-the structure provides gradual transition between the adjacent urban space and river edge. It allows the access to the water without a perceptibly hard borderline. In opposition to the planned landfill it reconnects with the natural assert of the side by creating the awareness of the rivers’ dynamics among the local inhabitants. I believe that my intervention will be beneficial both for the local dwellers and citizens of Gothenburg in general.

In order to achieve that, while designing, I have decided to focus on three main aspects: building a new relation the river at the river’s edge, make the space more accessible and more flexible.

Main axe of the presented structure is a path along the river-an avenue. The avenue – which is traditionally a straight route with a line of trees or a large shrubs running along each side, which is used as its French source ‘venir’ (to come) to indicate, emphasize the ‘coming to’ or arrival at a landscape or architectural feature.

All the other tools are subservient to the main axe, and as the trees planted along the avenue are the most cases all the same species, the elements of my design appear as belonging to one family. I am building its complexity by multiplying few simple elements and grouping them in various configurations. It is in order to give the uniform appearance along the full length of the avenue. In my proposal I am using the avenue as a mean of connection between cultural venues along is track and as an element caring a cultural value by itself.

Therefore in the prototypes I was trying to work with relation with the river edge, flooding and flexibility and accessibility of the spaces. I was trying to create a landscape with a path along the river. I have decided to create a structure of 11 piers and an avenue along all of them.
Proposal

**Fluctuation of the Göta river**

Exploring the spatial qualities of the river adjacent to the side, I have noticed that the water level constantly changes. The diagram registers constant changes of the water level. Yearly the difference between the maximum and minimum level can be even 1.40m, but daily it mostly vary between 30-60 cm.

I have decided to take advantage of this phenomenon. My structure becomes partly flooded. The changing water level is deciding about the shape of the shoreline and which parts are accessible and which are not.

The images represent different water levels and changing landscape. The last image below shows the situation with the highest registered water level. The orange dashed line represents a border of the main path—an avenue. The path always remains dry. The outer edge of the avenue divides the area into two parts: the one more exposed to the water dynamics and the other part, more connected to the land.
1. Avenue: Constantly dry Main axe of the structure, and main path along the river, mean of transportation Remain dry
2. Border between main zones: The outer edge of the avenue becomes the border between the area highly exposed to the influence of the flooding and the part more connected to the land
3. Shoreline
4. Constantly wet areas
Proposal

City of diversity. Exploring possible strategies for the water edge of Gothenburg.

5. Frequently flooded areas
6. Areas dominated by nature
7. Leisure areas exposed to the sun
8. Easily accessible open space
9. Smaller places with a more intimate atmosphere: Not so easily accessible and quite often covered by water therefore not so often visited

10. Tools: tools which help to evoke previously mentioned ambient which later becomes my spatial components

11. Main components per piers

12. Zones adjacent to the pavilions
Creating zones I was trying to name the type of space and ambience. The avenue is the main axis of the structure - a mean of connection between different zones. In order to awoke mentioned ambience I have created a set of tools which later become spatial components of my design. There are 11 piers in total and each is dominated by one of the elements. Three of those piers are dedicated to three buildings: Passage for food facilities, Exhibition pavilion and communities’ culture house. The different types of programs result from my research. I would like to employ the knowledge from different cultures into the final solution.

Passage for food facilities
The first building provides an opportunity to sell and share food. Food was always a mean of attracting and connecting people. There will be possible to purchase snacks from all around the world, and - during the common meal-exchanging knowledge and part of each other cultures.
I was working with models to explore spacial qualities they can provide. Working with the model of the gastronomic passage I was trying to shape the roof in a way that it would awoke a feeling of movement. The perception of the space changes while walking.

Exhibition pavilion
The second pavilion is intended for exhibitions. Various artists living in the city of Gothenburg will be able to present their works there. The place is sheltered and always open for the public. There is no entrance fee. The exhibiton pavilion can be transformed according to the requirements of exhibitions thanks to light, movable walls, situated on the rails.
The third pavilion is an alternative meeting place for all the associations renting the places in the culture houses all around the city. The place can be rented for free by everyone belonging to one of the associations or living in Gothenburg, and who would like to organize a cultural event or a meeting.

In the model I was trying to work with transparency and flexibility of the facade. The events carried after the dusk are more apparent due to the light coming through very slim stripes of wooden cover. The visualisation presents the situation when some parts of the structure are slightly flooded. The covering materials like wood and metal are still visible.
Proposal

Pavilions. Communities’ culture center. Entrance

City of diversity. Exploring possible strategies for the water edge of Gothenburg.
Components. Partly flooded structure
Proposal

**Components**

In order to elaborately explain my components, I have chosen one pier for a detailed description of the design. To begin, the general principle of the structure are presented below. The preliminary structure consists of two huge I-beams on three sets of pillars for each beam. The secondary structure is built by three-dimensional beams made of metal. Within the structural frame the floating units are attached. Those floating units are one of the factors allowing the artificial landscape for the constant change due to environmental conditions.

The level which allow access to the next part only when the water level is low enough.

Floating movable platform, adjusting to the water dynamics, always provide the access between the parts.

Biozones with flora and fauna characteristic for the wetlands.
Spatial components differ in height, breadth and its later function. However, the elements are built in a common way. The avenue is an attractive pathway along temporary inaccessible part of the structure. It remains unaffected by the water fluctuations. That is why it can be used all year around. Fixed levels, which are low enough to be submerged makes the fluctuation more discernible. An accumulation of levels with varying height makes the water fluctuation vividly apparent. The height of them determinates the frequency they are flooded. The decision in favor of smaller and larger steps has an immediate bearing on the possible uses. The material used to cover them also influence its function. (Wood encourage stay and sit, while metal is mainly dedicated to walk on)

Fixed ramps which makes people aware of the changing water level.

The lower levels are not so expose to the strong wind and more cozy to sit even during windy days. Floating levels are moving with the water, allowing or preventing communication between the adjacent levels. The ramps are fixed elements which by slow submergement in the water show even small changes in the water level.

The floating movable ramps are the connector between floating and fixed levels, allowing for the constant connection between those two. The floating ramps and levels create an alternative to the avenue pathway. The biozones are located in the spots constantly facing the water. Thanks to regular floods the plants are watered. The permanently uncovered parts of the structure become ponds and enhance the experience of flowing water making the direct contact always possible.

Floating movable ramps, which gives changing points of view on the surroundings.

The main factor influencing the design of the elements is their resistance to the corrosion. The structure is made of aluminum which is getting mat and protects itself afterwards. Some of the steps and ramps are covers by the painted steel - the others are allow to rust and change with the time. Not all the elements are entirely made of steel. There are also wooden parts which are changing the color with the time and humidity of the water is encouraging those processes. This re-establishment of the riverbank allows the urban tissue for a direct interweave with the water edge. It elevates formerly underestimated area into prominent part of the cityscape.

Ponds which are not covered part of the structure.
Components
Proposal

**Scenarios**

I would like to present how the space at Skeppsbron can be used all year around. In summer, people can exercise along the river, or just sunbathe and dangle their feet in the water.

![Image]

In autumn it is possible to seek shelter from the rain inside the building or attend lectures. Outdoors, one can take cover from the rain under the textile roof or conduct over activities on the decks.

![Image]
Scenarios during the winter include staying outdoors, for some fresh air on a winter sun. Children can build snowmen and have snowball fight.

In spring flock of birds returning from warmer parts of the globe fly by the pier and it is finally time to enjoy the warmer days!

I believe that my design creates inclusive environment along the river, which is attractive for people from all parts of the city. Moreover, the proposal directly corresponds to the urban conditions of the site.
City of diversity. Exploring possible strategies for the water edge of Gothenburg.
Acknowledgement

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Edyta Świątek
Models
Models
City of diversity. Exploring possible strategies for the water edge of Gothenburg.
Appendix

Models’ description

Testing ideas with models was one of my methods to improve the design. Presented photographs shows the path I have taken before I have reached the final proposal.

The adjacent images present flexibility of the wooden facade, made of very thin stripes. In order to improve elasticity and resilience the other material can be suggested: like a fiber glass or strong rubber.

The number and size of the openings in the facade can be adjusted by their users according to their needs.

The other models document the process. The images from pages:48-49 register my analyzes about the extension of the shoreline. I was testing the spatial alternatives to the landfill (suggested by municipality).

Pages 50-53 are representing my works with pavilions: I was testing many shapes and scales.

Pages 55-56 present how I was working with one choosen stripe. I was working at the same time with structure and the pavilion to make the design coherent. Simultaneously I was testing programs with the models.
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