



# PhD in URBAN PLANNING, DESIGN, AND POLICY -

## 39th cycle

**PNRR 118 PC Research Field: NEW METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND REPRESENTATION OF TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS IN HERITAGE-RICH AREAS**

Monthly net income of PhD scholarship (max 36 months)
€ 1195.5

In case of a change of the welfare rates during the three-year period, the amount could be modified.

Context of the research activity
<p><b>Motivation and objectives of the research in this field</b></p> <p>Cultural built heritage has become a key asset to enhance the image, tourist attractiveness, and retail appeal of an area or an entire city. Key projects target heritage buildings and complexes and adapt their forms and functioning to generate and extract economic value from places, their uses, and cultural meanings. While promising the physical conservation or restoration of built heritage, broader urban transformation processes sometimes become problematic for local communities. A certain level of disconnect may derive from the high-level technical expertise (e.g. UNESCO and transnational architectural firms) and public interventions. Recent research demonstrated that in the last 30 years more than 400 projects by transnational firms were completed in UNESCO World Heritage Sites and their buffer zones. Italy, the country with the highest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world (53 Cultural sites and 5 Natural sites) now has substantial investments at stake, from the national recovery plan (PNRR) to dedicated lines in local and regional governments' schemes. The proposed project will explore the available theories and methodologies to analyze and represent at multiple scales the projects and policies promoted by transnational actors in heritage-rich cities (with particular attention paid to UNESCO and transnational architecture firms). It will pose innovative questions, and collect new evidence, draw on case studies of transnational projects in the heritage-rich cities. It will approach multiple institutions and local actors</p>



	<p>within field work activities and promoted one workshop dedicated to presenting intermediate findings (e.g. with organizations such as the Organization of World Heritage Cities that coordinates more than 200 cities with UNESCO sites) and receive feedback.</p> <p>The main goals of the research are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Provide a systematic review of the available concepts and methods used for analyzing and assessing transnational projects in heritage-rich areas.</li> <li>2- Collect relevant evidence regarding specific built heritage projects and related urban transformations.</li> <li>3- Develop new methods for analyzing and representing the challenges and opportunities for such projects and processes at multiple scales.</li> <li>4- Test these new analytics and representation techniques with practitioners and decision-makers in order to validate the findings' relevance for heritage/urban policy and practice.</li> <li>5- Disseminate the results in both academic and practice-related environments.</li> </ol> <p>These findings will positively impact future projects in heritage-rich and meet the goals of the National Recovery Plan (PNRR-Tourism and Culture 4.0) and of Horizon Europe Strategic Cluster 2 of Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society.</p>
<b>Methods and techniques that will be developed and used to carry out the research</b>	<p>While recent years have brought some general assessment regarding star architecture projects and started problematizing their relation to historic city centers, specific in-depth analysis and representations regarding transnational projects and agency is still missing in the international debate. In particular, the complexity of multi-scalar projects that are generated by transnational networks of actors and international organization often emerge in terms of limited contextualization of interventions, disruption of heritage places, and long-term negative effects for local communities. Based on existing data bases and experimentation carried out the Politecnico di Milano TAU-Lab, this project aims at developing and testing new methodologies for analyzing and representing potential opportunities and risks associated with the key heritage projects and the related</p>



	<p>urban transformations. These new methodologies may involve GIS, dynamic visualization techniques, multi-media and AR/VR and they will be tested with practitioners and decision makers in order to ensure a high impact of the final findings for heritage/urban policy and practice. Digital models, that will be part of the toolbox, will be approached as part of the research and transformation process, and not as an end in and of themselves.</p> <p>The research project will develop new ways of analyzing key heritage projects and related urban transformation processes.</p> <p>The project will include the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Critical literature and methodological review regarding the transnational projects in heritage-rich cities and the existing methods for analyzing and representing them. [months 1-12]</li><li>2. In-depth study of 3 cases of past projects and their legacy in Naples (e.g. Piazza del Municipio project by Siza and Souto De Mura), Venice (Fondaco dei Tedeschi project by OMA), and Paris (Louis Vuitton Foundation project by Frank Gehry). [months 8-18]</li><li>3. Identification of best techniques of analysis and representation for the case studies, as well as a broader set of example in literature. [months 10-24]</li><li>4. Development of presentation of intermediate findings to a specialized audience (e.g. workshop at Organization of World Heritage Cities, OWHC, or the Architects' Council of Europe, ACE). [months 19-24]</li><li>5. Dissemination of results at the national and international levels through publications, academic and public events [months 25-36].</li></ol> <p>The research activities will benefit from and contribute to the activities of the UPDP PhD program and the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, as well as on specific research units and international networks. This research program includes a 6-month internship at Propp Srl, a leading firm specialized in mapping, representation, and communication, with extensive cooperation with cultural and heritage actors in Italy, and a period of at least 6 months in a research center abroad (see next point).</p>
<b>Educational objectives</b>	



The PhD program aims at providing interpretative, analytical and representation tools as well as research/planning/design methodologies to further advance urban studies, and planning, urban policies, and governance with specific reference to the PNRR mission and related EU policies. The project will train the PhD student in academic research (e.g. literature review, research methods, academic writing, data visualization, presentation of research findings to specialized and non-specialized audiences, etc.) as well as in applied research and practice, deriving from both the policy-oriented subject and the ad-hoc experiences in a specialized firm and other international research centres.

The PhD candidate is expected to develop advanced research skills that are relevant to planning practice. For this reason, during the period of internship at Propp, the PhD student will carry out an in-depth study of innovative methodologies for the analysis and representation of transnational projects in heritage-rich contexts; develop advanced mapping skills (GIS, multi-scalar projects, etc.) and representation of complex urban problems and solutions (through multi-media, AR/VR devices, etc.). These innovative analysis and mapping methods will be applied to three case studies in different geographical areas where Propp operates and tested with practitioners and decision makers.

The PhD program meets the highest international standards and this specific project expects the PhD candidate to work in international research networks. During the second year, the PhD student will spend at least 6 months abroad, at the IREST (Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes Supérieures du Tourisme of the Paris 1 Sorbonne-Panthéon University) and will contact the World Heritage Center at UNESCO, Paris, or will work in a similarly specialized research center among the ones cooperating on these matters with the researcher coordinators University of Valencia (IRTIC), University of Antwerp (ARCHES), Pratt Institute in New York (SAVI) or Cracow University of Economics (UNESCO Chair of Heritage and Urban Studies).



	<p>According to its international orientation, the PhD program trains highly qualified researchers and professionals in the fields of spatial planning, design and management of urban projects and policy, social sciences, urban studies, and urban governance. Researchers with such profile may be employed by Italian and international academic institutions, public bodies, cultural foundations and research centres, public and private development agencies, and private firms.</p> <p>This PhD research project will disclose job opportunities connected to the international network involved during the research, including prime international universities and research centers, international and national heritage preservation/management bodies (UNESCO, OWHC, Italian Ministry of Culture), urban planning and architectural design firms. Heritage and cultural policies for creativity are central to the work of EU-level, national, regional and local institutions that may be interested in advanced (and research trained) profiles for high-level positions.</p>
<b>Composition of the research group</b>	12 Full Professors 13 Associated Professors 1 Assistant Professors 55 PhD Students
<b>Name of the research directors</b>	Prof. Davide Ponzini

### Contacts

**Research supervisor:**

Prof. Davide Ponzini  
*davide.ponzini@polimi.it*  
*phone +39/022399.5440*

**PhD program coordinator:**

prof. Luca Gaeta  
*e-mail: luca.gaeta@polimi.it*  
*phone +39/02/2399.5426*

**Contact in the PhD Office at DAStU:**

dr. Marina Bonaventura  
*E-mail: marina.bonaventura@polimi.it;*  
*phone +39/02/2399.5165*



*Eugenio Chiesa*

*email: phd-updp@polimi.it*

*phone +39/02/2399.5488*

*Further information is available at: Handbook a.y. 2021/202 of the PhD Program in Urban Planning, Design and Policy (UPDP)*

*[https://www.dottorato.polimi.it/fileadmin/user\\_upload/corsi/Urban\\_planning/Handbook\\_DAStU\\_UPDP\\_Programme\\_37\\_Cycle\\_21-22.pdf](https://www.dottorato.polimi.it/fileadmin/user_upload/corsi/Urban_planning/Handbook_DAStU_UPDP_Programme_37_Cycle_21-22.pdf)*

**Additional support - Financial aid per PhD student per year (gross amount)**

Housing - Foreign Students	--
Housing - Out-of-town residents (more than 80Km out of Milano)	--

**Scholarship Increase for a period abroad**

Amount monthly	597.76 €
By number of months	6

**National Operational Program for Research and Innovation**

Company where the candidate will attend the stage (name and brief description)	PROPP SRL MILANO
By number of months at the company	6
Institution or company where the candidate will spend the period abroad (name and brief description)	Paris 1 Sorbonne-Panthéon University, IREST (Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes Supérieures du Tourisme)
By number of months abroad	6

**Additional information: educational activity, teaching assistantship, computer availability, desk availability, any other information**

Each PhD candidate has a **research budget** available as follows to purchase books and materials, and to finance participation in courses, summer schools, workshops and conferences:

1st year: max 1.624,30 euros

2nd year: max 1.624,30 euros

3rd year: max 1.624,30 euros

**Total amount: 4.872,90 euros per student**

There are various forms of financial aid for both research and teaching assistantship. PhD candidates are encouraged to take part in these activities within the limits allowed by the regulations.