



PhD in DESIGN - 40th cycle

PNRR 629 PA Research Field: REFRAMING PARTICIPATORY PRAXIS FOR A MORE RADICAL JUSTICE DESIGN IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACES

Monthly net income of PhDscholarship (max 36 months)
€ 1300.0
In case of a change of the welfare rates during the three-year period, the amount could be modified.

Context of the research activity	
Motivation and objectives of the research in this field	<p>Objective The research aims to devise a public-private politics that works in effectively engaging communities noticeably marginalised by the current instruments of participation for the regeneration of urban public spaces. It aims to influence public administration in conversations and decisions of public space in the present and future, to support more equitable and progressive changes. This will be achieved from a situated thinking perspective (Haraway, 1988), which entails considering other worldings and learning to pay attention and listen to the margins (hooks, 1990). Through the development and testing of situated design tools, participatory design (PD) and power dynamics analysis, the aim is to reach marginalised publics to impact with more inclusive, socially and environmentally sustainable solutions.</p> <p>Background Acknowledging the existence of plural and ontologically (Escobar, 2018) diverse worlds, encourages fresh examination of our complex relationalities while challenging how design actively contributes to it. This, in turn, requires the engagement of diverse publics, and extends participation through design as a form of democratic enquiry (DiSalvo, 2022), enabling cultural and civic political action (Keshavarz&Maze, 2013; Rancière, 2013) and new forms of collaboration toward place-centred regenerations. PD and design for social innovation are testing ways to increase public engagement in co-designing commons and developing top-down/bottom-up strategies.</p>



	<p>Neighbourhoods, often facing gentrification and social stratification, are activated by democratic experimentalism through acupunctural interventions (convivial gardens, tactical urbanism, citizen science, etc.) serving as forms of resistance to global issues. Incorporating community knowledge creates more livable neighborhoods, empowers residents, and enhances trust in authorities and democracy (NEB framework).</p> <p>Focus</p> <p>Yet, such experimentalism often results in small-scale, medium-term practices involving only the privileged – those who can afford to dedicate time to imagining alternative futures –, further entrenching inequalities. Communities already marginalized by economic, class, gender issues and other forms of separation, and overburdened by work and caregiving demands, are often excluded from co-creation spaces meant to benefit them (White, 2021).</p> <p>This acupunctural strategy is rethinking cumulatively the way we develop and live in neighbourhoods. However, to continue building on it requires reframing a design politics, a more radical and intersectional justice design and building on a feminist radical resistance.</p> <p>Beyond the dualism city/periphery, the research questions the direct association of welcoming, safe and liberated (metronormativity concept by Halberstam, 2005) with the city to understand how (relationally) peripheral locations should rebuilt their proximity network.</p>
<p>Methods and techniques that will be developed and used to carry out the research</p>	<p>This proposal leverages the research group's experience with Polimi/Off-Campus, focusing on relationship interfaces in four Milan neighborhoods. It also builds on tools for participation and public space planning to promote sustainable mobility (e.g. Progetto Piazze Aperte) by the Municipality of Milan.</p> <p>The research addresses in particular Mission 5 'Inclusione e Coesione' of the PNRR.</p> <p>The research approach will be based on community-centred design approach in multi-actor systems in urban contexts and design for social innovation within the theoretical framework of PD. This will be looked from multiple social and cultural angles: situatedness,</p>



	<p>materiality, agency issues, political implications, social, cultural, environmental sustainability, environmental psychology, and phenomenological anthropology. The research is located at the multidisciplinary intersection of spatial design, service design, and future studies, specifically focused on the phenomenological dimension of spaces in the framework of the relational intersections of spaces and services, and feminist theories. The research builds on reflecting on the cultural, social, and political role of the 'place' construct (Casey, 1993, 1997), understood in a broad sense of containing the interconnected cultural, historical, and ritual meanings of beings and things, as the critical instance for a meaningful social regeneration of communities within the dynamics of culture, power, and economy (Quijano, 2000). Central to this reflection is the exploration of the intricate relationship between temporalities and place (Tsing, 2015; Di Salvo, 2015; Huybrechts, et al., 2021), and the regeneration of commons that involves navigating complex interdependencies tied to shared identities within cities, neighbourhood transformations, social frictions, immigration, and marginalisation. As instruments for space regeneration and re-articulation of interactions, co-design practices are deployed to engage with diverse temporalities in both the physical and social environment. The research will use methodologies from ethnography (interviews, focus groups, case studies, etc.), co-design (through the lens of the politics of care and decolonial design practices, de la Bellacasa, 2017), foresight methodologies, and social sciences. It will be characterised by the theorisation of empirical data, contextualising and creative analysis. The researcher will then go on to develop techniques that question the participation processes used so far.</p>
<p>Educational objectives</p>	<p>The research process is meant to upgrade the candidate's critical thinking within design research. In the interplay between the public administrations and academia, the training will also cover the development of skills and competencies in research management, organisation, and planning, together training on learning funding instruments.</p>



	<p>The educational objectives of this research include the followings:</p> <p>1. Knowledge Upon completion of the PhD programme, the candidate will possess both fundamental expertise in his or her study topic and an extensive knowledge of the subject field. The applicant will possess expertise in formulating research questions, be able to build a theoretical foundation and framework for the study and be able to acquire approaches to advance academic research.</p> <p>2. Skills The candidate will be capable of developing significant scientific issues and assignments and implementing the close relationship between the PA and the research. At a higher academic level, the student will be able to conduct internationally significant research. He or she will possess the ability to comprehend and resolve challenging problems pertaining to social issues in the field of study.</p> <p>3. General competence The ideal candidate will be able to take the initiative and push advancements while also taking into account the constraints of their present level of understanding. The PhD programme provides theoretical understanding as well as hands-on training in scientific work and technique. Notably, it will enable the applicant to engage in an immersive learning environment that includes field research and collaboration with the PA.</p>
<p>Job opportunities</p>	<p>The research is connected with the Municipality of Milan in order to study possible future policies and R&I actions on public spaces based on PD practices.</p> <p>As part of Mission 4 “Istruzione e Ricerca” of PNRR, the position aims to qualify a professional able to enhance the advancement of research in direct relation to the challenges outlined in national and European development plans. This is achieved also through the active involvement of the “Direzione Specialistica Autorità di Gestione e Monitoraggio Piani Unità Fondi UE Diretti” of the Municipality of Milan, whose areas of expertise include the regeneration of city areas and public spaces and the development, management and monitoring of national and European funding opportunities/projects.</p>



	<p>To foster employability, the research will provide with intellectual capital (i.e. tools, strategies, methods) needed for them to acquire and develop skills and competencies for the future workfield.</p> <p>Experts in design thinking, spatial and service design, developing scenarios and strategies, and user experience design are in great demand. Following completion of this PhD, the candidate will be eligible to apply for positions in strategic design or service, particularly in public administration, as well as consultant or project manager to organisations seeking inclusive and sustainable alternatives to their current processes.</p> <p>This profile can be integrated into creative and cultural organisations that examine processes of urban regeneration (both with regard to the public space configuration and the intangible cultural and social heritage of places).</p> <p>Additionally, he or she may work for social enterprises, paying close attention to issues of marginalisation in general as well as inclusion, multiculturalism, and social integration.</p> <p>In the end, he or she may secure a job as an independent consultant for public administrations, foundations, and territorial development bodies—as well as other local and supralocal authorities.</p>
Composition of the research group	<p>3 Full Professors 3 Associated Professors 3 Assistant Professors 8 PhD Students</p>
Name of the research directors	Annalinda De Rosa, Davide Fassi

Contacts	
<p>annalinda.derosa@polimi.it 02.2399.5853 https://www.desis.polimi.it</p>	

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	650.0 €
By number of months	6

National Operational Program for Research and Innovation	
Company where the candidate will attend the stage (name and brief description)	Comune di Milano Direzione Specialistica Autorità di Gestione e Monitoraggio Piani Unità Fondi UE Diretti
By number of months at the company	6
Institution or company where the candidate will spend the period abroad (name and brief description)	TU Delft, Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering (IDE), The Netherlands
By number of months abroad	6

Additional information: educational activity, teaching assistantship, computer availability, desk availability, any other information
<p>Educational activities (purchase of study books and material, funding for participation in courses, summer schools, workshops and conferences): financial aid per PhD student per year max 5.300,25 euros per student (total for 3 years)</p> <p>Teaching assistantship: availability of funding in recognition of supporting teaching activities by the PhD student there are various forms of financial aid both for research and teaching activities. The PhD student is encouraged to take part in these activities, within the limits allowed by the regulations.</p> <p>Computer availability: 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year: Each research group will supply PhD student with a computer, if necessary.</p> <p>Desk availability: 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year: Each research group will supply phd student with a desk.</p>