The doctoral program in Territorial Design and Government merges the two previous Ph.D. courses in Urban, Regional, and Environmental Planning (head by Prof. Valeria Erba) and in Urban Projects and Policies (head by prof. Patrizia Gabellini).

Objectives of the Doctoral Program
Basic objective of the course is to provide analytical and interpretative tools, as well as planning/design methods, able to apprehend and improve institutional approaches, ordinary procedures and experimental practices for territorial government and design. The complexity of territorial change in an open society requires a wide, pro-active innovation in planning practices and expertise. The interrelation between urban design and projects evaluation, environmental planning and landscape urbanism, together with urban governance, growth management and real estate development are the foci of the research projects developed by the faculty and the students involved in the course. The formative program assumes that many planners are involved with development not only from a regulatory position, but also proposing and managing actual projects at different scales. Comparative assessment of best practices and explorative design – at territorial, urban, and local scale – are the tools used to pursue more effective planning methods and techniques.

Contents and research training
The doctoral program offers advanced training in the critical construction of territorial plans, projects and policies by integrating different disciplinary approaches. The varied inter-disciplinary suggestions offered to Ph.D. students represent a great opportunity for understanding the multiple dimension of territorial projects and policies, but the students will be required to convey them to a clear research project among the following research streams:
- Spatial plan formats and tools
- Role of the project in leading territorial change
- Evaluation and management of urban projects and policies
- Descriptions/interpretations of cities and territories
- Decisions and governance
- Nature and soil
The doctoral candidates will be asked to reflect upon the traditions of planning and urban design within the Italian and European context, and the actual actions for mastering territorial change also exploiting international best practice comparisons. The latter will be achieved through the organization of international seminars and through an internship in international research centers, universities, and public administrations. The central importance assigned to the doctoral thesis determines the attribution of a significant quota of formative credits to the activities finalized to conceive and write the dissertation along all the three years, as well to the training on specific themes related to the final doctoral dissertation by an active participation to applied researches and workshops.

Professional and research profiles
The Ph.D. program is aimed to prepare researchers and skilled professionals for public administrations and the private sector, research centers, and universities, with specific expertise:
- in governing territorial development through integrated projects and innovative procedures able to share planning decisions with the involved actors and communities;
- in urban policy/project evaluation and management, with skills for mastering market oriented planning policies, impact assessment and compensations; conflicts mediations; betterment recapture and p/p joint development;
- in applied urban and environmental design, in order to create physical projects able to interpret and guide the economical, social, and political dimensions of land development, and improve the quality of life and the sustainability of the built environment.

Chair: Prof. Rossella Salerno

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DOCTORAL PROGRAM
IN TERRITORIAL DESIGN
AND GOVERNMENT

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Water is a shared resource and its management needs to take into account a wide variety of conflicting interests. Water fulfils indeed various functions for very different usages and users. Therefore, water is valued differently by various groups of stakeholders. Furthermore, water is also dealt at different levels (multi-level) and by different actors (multi-actors) in the definition, delivery and governance. As long as water is abundant relative to its use, these interaction effects may not be noticeable. Moreover, natural water supply varies over time and some variability can be compensated by the buffering capacity inherent in the water system such as natural storage or adaptation in water use patterns. But in dry climate, or as water use and pollution rise, the externalities become problematic without institutional arrangements to clarify rights and responsibilities. In this context, thus, extremes events, such as droughts, putting a strain on competing uses have always been one of the major challenges for water management.

Bolivia and Morocco have experienced extreme droughts within the past decade. Droughts of even greater intensity will likely increase in the coming years, and other stresses related to global market driven transformations and population growth will compound the effects of climate variability and change on water resources in these countries.

The first part of the research deals with analysing drought as natural hazard and the differences from drought and the other natural hazards, the different definitions, the classifications, and the impacts of drought on ecosystems and on humans and their activities.

In the second part, the research focuses first on what are today challenges of water management, such as uncertainty related to climate change, increased water demand due to population growth, urbanization, and global market, and how such challenges require both water managers to change their perspectives on how to deal with water issues and water organisations to adapt their routines to cope and face those problems. Second the dissertation analyses how water management and water organisations respond to today challenges. Indeed, the traditional water management defined by a command and control approach is now considered inadequate to respond to uncertainties and extremes expected with climate change and other contextual conditions. As result, water management ruled by adaptive water governance has shifted towards iterative and integrated management practices, more aligned with concepts of integrated water resources management and adaptive water management. This context of high uncertainty and high stakes creates major challenges to water organisations, which require the ability to analyse their environment and expand the range of response options necessary to adapt to such changes and implement an adaptive water management. And finally, a literature review is carried out in order to understand what adaptive capacity means with reference to an organizations, and how the attributes of adaptive capacity make an organisation able to identify opportunity, gather resources, capture expertise, create partnerships and opportunities for dialogue and manage and monitor the process.

In the third part, on the base of the literature review, a conceptual framework to assess organizational adaptive capacity has been developed. The different characteristics present in the reviewed literature have been clustered according two categories identified by the author, which respectively refer to the problem management phases and to the capacities to run organisational routines. Consequently, the developed framework has been tested within two case studies, in detail the municipality of Tomave (Bolivia) and the water basin authority of the Souss-Massa Draa (Morocco).

In the fourth part, the research highlights, the barriers related to the water governance that hamper the achievement of the full range of benefits foreseen by the implementation of adaptive water governance approach in Bolivia and Morocco. Those are identified with: (1) corruption and elite pressure; (2) institutional legacy; (3) transparency; (4) fragmentation; (5) lack of tools; (6) legitimacy. Furthermore, the study underlines the barriers related to the development and enhancement of organisational adaptive capacity of the water authorities analysed in two case studies. And finally, the study highlights how although some common characteristics of water governance can be highlighted in the two case studies, water governance responses should not be necessarily the same in Morocco and Bolivia. The regional context is indeed relevant and influences how water governance is perceived and structured locally as well as it determines what can be done. Such differences should not be considered as a limitation on the contrary these give us the chance to better understand the concept of both adaptive governance and how and why barriers are built up. Moreover, it underlines how the organizations analysed have a low processing capacity of their routine. Therefore, such incapacity to transform routines as the context is changing leads to both the construction of barriers and the inability of an organization to support the process of change of the society. In addition, the dissertation emphasis that the development of a working system based on cooperation requires first that an organization acquires skills and adapt its routines to the new working system. Furthermore, the development of a participatory process of planning and implementation of policies would help to reduce the trade-offs and conflicts related to water management. Linked to this, the development of a system for monitoring and evaluation of policies implemented organization can contribute to build an iterative mechanism so to allow a redefinition and improvement of such policies.
A consensus was forming during the past 20 years in Europe that the city network has been a new paradigm of regional structure (Camagni, 1993; Dematteis, 1997; Scott, 2001 and Capello, 2007). This study assumed that the city network would also emerge in Chinese cities system in these years when the industrialization is progressing vigorously and the process of globalization is undergoing in several cities in China. It based on the regional and urban studies sphere, took the Yangtze River Delta (YRD), China as a case, explicated the phenomenon, factors and corresponding transformations of city network in the studied region, and contributed new features to the city network concept itself.

It utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches in dealing with the study. It started from the economic and geographical definitions, then applied the geographical models, Fortune 500 (2012) database on cities and firms and network analysis theories to quantify the city network in study area, later it used the statistics approaches, narrative research and case study to interpret the reasons for forming this city network from topographical, economic and cognitive dimensions, finally it discussed the possible corresponding outcomes on population and territorial spatial transformations by the means of correlation analysis. The study used the firm ownerships approach and the information of Chinese headquarters and subsidies of 18 multinational enterprises of Fortune 500 (2012), sketched the international and national level complementary networks in Yangtze River Delta, and verified the Hierarchy of city-networks model proposed by Camagni (1993). On the national level, it turned out that the links/ cooperation among cities/ functions of the same rank existed in this region, but the network is not very robust, in the sense that the intensively linked city network (present top 75% of the linkages) have the single center of Shanghai. Geographically, two principle linkage-passages were existent in the region, starting from Shanghai towards Hefei and from Shanghai towards Hangzhou (the line to Hefei was more strong than that to Hangzhou) and a more connected triangle area composed by Shanghai, Hefei and Hangzhou in which the linkages between cities were more rich, while the rest of the cities connected preferentially with Shanghai in the form of mono-line. Then it figured out that the topography-related economy and culture, the specificities and the relational proximity are the important factors in shaping the urban networks in this region with the case of comparison of Suzhou city and Jiaxing city. Firstly the homogeneous topology provide similar economic base, culture preparation and some traditional traffic pass, and the city linkages and network are primarily emerged and preferentially extend in this kind of place. Secondly, by examining the specificities of the YRD cities on primary, manufacturing and tertiary sectors 1990s, 2000 and 2010, the study argued that in the “central place era” (agriculture era), there were several compound cities in the hierarchical top with their dependent surroundings; in the industrial era, city network emerged basing on the urban specializations; while in the post-industrial era, city network would be constructed by cities with specificities on manufacturing or service, but also with compound and complete urban service, and the specificities of intensely linked cities trend to grown thin. Thirdly, the relational proximity which is presented in the similar “development zones” policies, the similar cognition of local government and the spillover of relations strongly affected the intensity of connections. Finally it examined the possible corresponding demographic and spatial results. In the demographic dimension, both the population and employment transformations were evidently correlated with the city links in the region. The cities with the rapidest growth of population and employment (2006-2010), are located along the strongest linking path from Shanghai to Hefei in Southern Jiangsu, and less growth were realized in the cities of Zhejiang, like Hangzhou and Ningbo which showed some less links with Shanghai compared with the previous ones. However these cities on the periphery of the region - Northern Jiangsu and Southern Zhejiang - contrarily and generally lost population and employments.

In the spatial dimension, the city network/linkage turned out to be one of the theoretical tools to explain the territorial extensions in this region. It succeeded in explaining some cases, but it has limits in the other, because the territorial transformation is a multifaceted process that could not be explained by one factor. Furthermore, the gravitational model still matters in the interpreting of the spatial extensions, it could more explained as the “attractive power/force”, while the city linkages/ network are also important as the ”attractive path” – without the linkages as path, the attractive power could not spread or spill over. Thirdly, beside the increase of central districts, the growth of intermediate counties/ county-level cities are more obvious: where the linkages are more intensive, the intermediate counties/ cities get more robust growth. It means the density of towns are higher, and the functions of towns get upgraded.

The study concluded that the city network structure and the hierarchy of city network are verified in Yangtze River Delta, China in recent 10 years although it is not robust enough. And the topography-related economy and culture, the specificities and the relational proximity played important roles in shaping the urban networks in this region. Especially it observed that the base of city network has been changed from strong specificities towards small specificities with mix urban services. And the city network is corresponded to the distribution of knowledge, the population and employment increase and the territorial extension, but they are actually enhanced reciprocally: the city network has been a factor for the allocating of productive factors – human, land and knowledge, and these factors also backwards enhanced the city network itself.

1. Complementary network of YRD at the national level

2. The leading specificities of YRD cities by 37 sectors 2010
LAND TAKE.
Towards an integration between disciplines

Stefano Salata - Supervisor. Prof. Ciro Gardi

Land take is a wide phenomena and different strategies or instruments to prevent it are now discussed. Nevertheless, the goal of reducing land take needs to be supported by a deeper consideration of three critical aspects: the land use detection, the development of synthetic indicators and the change in perspective of soils functions for its future management.

One of the most critical aspect regarding land take is that a lot of discipline are engaged in assessing land use change and each has its own technical language. Terminology, interpretations and indicators regarding land use data are manifold and this is contributing to a sectorial scientific deepening of environmental issues on land use change. But the creation of social responsibility on land take reduction is a political goal rather than a technical or academic exercise, and it request an easier treatment of essential questions. Being more easier and understandable means give to planners and administrators consistent information, methodologies and tools for provide solutions on land take reduction.

Despite a unique demand of intervention and regulation of the incessant consumption of open space, which is made at aggregated scale, there is a weakness in connections with the improvement of particular land use development patterns. This problem is referred to a deep epistemological question: land cover and land use are often confused. While land covers refers to the ecological state and physical appearance of the land surface based on a classification system, land use refers to its human purpose. That's why change in land use is not corresponding with alteration in land surface covers, and land use has limited value as indicator unlike land cover. Instruments focused on the containment of land take are aimed to define two different aspects: reduction of the amount of land development and improvement of land use patterns. If theory on the first aspect is more advanced and rooted into environmental sciences, the second aspect is much more uncovered by studies. But planners have to analyze the problems through interdisciplinary research that moves from traditional boundaries between the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences, going over the traditional analysis of covers and identifying possible models of land use management at different scales. An overview on what happened in the last 50 years suggests that city centers are not able to regenerate themselves in order to keep people inside: traffic, noise, air pollution, but also prices of housing and the general costs of life are demonstrating the weakness of public policies for supporting dense, central urban areas.

Spatial and social impacts of soil sealing are so long analyzed in Europe and also in Italy and the research output show us how the social and energetic price that collectiveness pay for urban sprawl. The thesis presents a scenario of the "land take" phenomena, starting from its definition to the proposals of solutions for its containment. Recently (April 2012) European Commission provides a publication "Guidelines on best practice to limit, mitigate or compensate soil sealing" which gives support to national policies for reduce the speed of land take trends in Europe. The need of reduce land take depends on a simple consideration: if soil is limited and its natural functions are irreproducible, planners, architects, politicians and citizens have to be aware of how the environmental issue connected with urban expansion is crucial for life, health and for the need to consider back the limits of earth's artificialization process.

Within the "case studies" the thesis presents a deep analysis of the major problems that affect the field of studies of geographers, environmental engineers and planners: the production of constant, effective and significative indicators on land take; the connection between indicators and spatial policies for limiting or compensating land take. After a period, during '70 in Italy, where urban expansion was blamed as the major problem of land use policy, today there is a need to consider back land take as a major problem for land use control. The most recent data on land take are demonstrating how abstract and fast is the conversion of agricultural and natural land into urban functions. This process is due to the augment of new infrastructures, houses, commercial and tertiary sites. Every year European Environment Agency (EEA) gives a scenario about how strong is the phenomena; also in Italy the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT) and the Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA) publishes reports emphasizing, through datas, the problem of land take and soil sealing in urban areas. But once understood the quantitative characteristics of land take, new issues comes up: are measures sufficient to give adequate informations to politicians and planners to adopt adequate policies against land take? There is a way to integrate environmental knowledge on the poor soil quality consideration of planners? A simple land use change analysis (LUC) is highly affected by the land use detection: topography, variability between data and sources, the classification system, projections system and technology can have a significant effect on the simple measure of the land. The thesis points out how land take detections is affected by underestimation or overestimation of specific land use classes between different scales of observation. A second aspect, related to the first, is the production of land take indicators, which are powerful tools to simplify and quantify information on complex ongoing process of land transformations. But indicators regarding land take are too much scientific ground oriented, fragmented in such a lot of approaches and not easily applicable for practical land use planning or policy. A composite indicator on land take impact is far from being realized but a first methodology is proposed. At least the interaction between scientific and environmental discipline and practices of land use planning have to be enforced, and for this reason a shift form a pure analytical approach to a more practical evaluation on possible scenario of land use management is required for future upgrading of land take limitation. Soil has not to be considered only as an environmental good for biomass production, but also as a producer of a complex variety of competitive environmental functions.

As regards as the possibility to implement soil sealing guidelines and to activate a sustainable soil and land governance, a multidisciplinary approach is needed to create connections between general, abstract causes (land take limitation) and the development of specific patterns of land use management. The thesis shows how it is possible to connect general policies with the local needs; often land take is blamed as a global problem but nevertheless it request specific solutions to be stopped.

The multidimensional and multifunctional approach on soil study is the pillar of a new consideration of soil knowledge for land use management. In the thesis different pattern of land take are presented, and a multifunctional approach on soil is tested for support the creation of ecological compensation as a technical tool for land use planning.
RUSSIAN CITIES AT THE CROSSROADS: GETTING LOST IN TRANSITION OR MOVING TOWARDS REGENERATION

Irina Slepukhina - Supervisor: Prof. Lidia Diappi

After the collapse of the USSR, Russia has engaged itself in a complex transformation from central-planned to market economy and has replaced the space and urban planning approaches. It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that since the completion of the Soviet regime and the end of centralized policies on urban planning Russian cities space underwent deep transformation. The post-Soviet cities are facing a set of challenges such as degradation of the urban economy, rapid deterioration of housing and communal infrastructures, poor transport maintenance, increasing transport congestion and social segregation. The crisis of Russian cities is a result of reforms, shock therapy and the inelastic transition to market conditions. However, during transition period cities have got different impulses for their development. Recently it is apparent that the complex socioeconomic, spatial and political trends are leading towards unbalance spatial development and an increasing unevenness among Russian cities.

The study is set out on the one hand to demonstrate within a historical and recent politico-economic frame the peculiarities of Russian urbanization which have to be taken into account for the creation of urban regeneration tools and on the other hand by means of neural network self-organizing map (NN SOM) application to explore recently emerging types of cities which could serve the base for the development of urban regeneration initiatives. For making comprehensive analysis the transformation processes have been considered at the national, regional and local perspectives in respect of territorial-administrative levels of city system which are undergoing different political pressures, speed of transformation but at the same time they are deeply interconnected.

This PhD thesis seeks to address the following questions: What is the evolution of Russian urban system in respect to geographical, economical and political context and how the city system has been altered due to transition from centrally-planned to market economy model? To what extent various urban settlements have gotten development impulses and why different cities were following different development trajectories? How federal policies are affecting the different types of Russian cities, why in this way, which is dynamic factor, and what is endowed for urban regeneration?

The PhD study has provided a framework for rethinking Russian cities in a way, what supplements today’s polarizing tendency towards Moscow with other cities along the huge territory of the Russian Federation. As the country moves to increase its richness and welfare the thesis has looked at how the reorganization of the Russian city system can contribute to equity and welfare objectives.

The transformation of the national city system has proved that the soviet planning approach based on the space ‘equity’ criteria bypassed unfavorable conditions and irrespective of transport cost is irrelevant in post-soviet market reality when geographical location, transport accessibility, regional wealth have significant value for people and for business. Apart from a demographic dynamics, the result of this study indicates that Russian city system in some aspects has been shaped by national policies. If the Soviet era was an attempt to level the space around the country, during the post-soviet period the space production is limited to few selected areas which have got a significant federal attention and support, while others have remained unsustained and neglected, and had to adjust themselves to the new market conditions being unassisted. On the other hand the study indicates that the transformation of the Russian city system is going under chaotic federal political initiatives in the absence thereof and integrated spatial development strategy and comprehensive view of further territorial development that logically have led to a fragmentation of the country’s space and thereafter urban decline. The results of this study show that recent post-soviet Russian cities could be characterized as ‘faceless’ cities getting lost in transition because the role of cities in the national economy is blurred and the lack of attention is paid to find effective models and approaches for urban recovery.

The study has proved that post-soviet cities demand a complex regeneration which could be based on diversification and modernization of urban economic base, transport network extension, improvement of housing conditions. Launching the Russian urban regeneration policy demands a preparation phase starting with increasing the urban value in contemporary political discourse. Nevertheless the changes require a long term commitment and should be based on long-term strategy approach, that should be counterbalance existing short-term urban actions. Therefore, there is no single quick solution for many years of disinvestment and urban decline. The practice of urban extension which is promoted now by the governmental bodies should be replaced by integrating urban regeneration initiatives, which promote the sustainable compact urban development with reinforcement of interurban connection. Nevertheless, we are optimistic about the process of post-soviet cities’ transformation. The emergence of various urban oriented initiatives proves that urban discourse is getting the force and become an actual topic for discussion among communities.

The PhD thesis is organized in seven chapters. Chapter 1 gives the importance of the topic and study background. Chapters 2 and 3 cover the history of the Russian urban system transformation and outlines the peculiarities of urban structure. The survey embraces three main periods of Russian urbanization: imperialistic, soviet and post-soviet. The post-Soviet period is stressed and considered in detail, providing the snapshot of contemporary Russian urbanization. Chapter 4 provides an overview of existing political initiatives which have an impact on the urban space reconfiguration. With Chapter 5 begins the empirical part of the study. By means of the NN SOM, the PhD study has investigated and singled out groups of cities with high internal resemblance. Due to SOM implementation it has been possible to identify twenty five urban clusters with similar socioeconomic trends, where each group is characterized by an appropriate profile (a codebook). Moreover the empirical results have allowed to identify a new urban ranking, structured in four layers: ‘urban engines’, ‘strong cities’, ‘dynamic cities’ and ‘weak cities’. The obtained city groups have a various paths and parameters of transformation. The proposed four groups of cities have been superimposed with urban regional division. The results show that different regions are presented in various combinations of urban classes and have diverse city-region systems. Based on the results retrieved in previous chapters, Chapter 6 discusses various political initiatives, emerging trends and perspectives in different city groups. In doing so it discovers some of the significant shortcomings of the applied development policies, that seek to promote a few politically appointed growth poles (among ‘urban engines’) and simultaneously curbs the regeneration opportunities from all the rest cities. The chapter provides the detailed analysis of some urban regeneration practice in Russian cities. Chapter 7 concludes the study by reiterating and discussing some findings and themes emerging during the research.
URBAN DESIGN, QUALITY AND ECONOMIC VALUE

Ali Ustun - Supervisor: Assistant Prof. Andrea Arcidiacono

At the upturn of the 21st century, the changing characteristics of the economy realm summoned up with globalization the de-industrialization process nonetheless growing environmental concerns have solicited new paradigms regarding the sustainability of the settlement structures, provision of public goods through the process of building activity. Likewise the quality concept in urban design has also demonstrated an evolution, which was originally focused on the space-syntax analysis of physical environment, towards a more solid focus on ensuring obtaining of collective goods, well functioning public amenity by the economic resources that flow from the development activity.

However, the well-functioning of this mechanism depends on the economic resources generated from the development, and willingness of the private sector to implement them. Thus, the economic questions related to the urban development, in relation to the devolution of the role of local governments which were expected to take a more active role in the management of the urban areas with their diminishing economic resources. This has forced many local governments to find new ways of funding the public amenities and consequently many of the crucial features of the built environment (i.e. development density, dimension of open spaces, mix of uses and etc.) became a negotiation item in public-private negotiations for the new development. This process, which characterizes the way in which the most of the urban development takes place, inevitability gives a certain space to negotiation over the mix of uses, type and dimension of the public goods to be provided and amount of the construction to permitted in order to offset all these costs which private parties commit to expend. Therefore it’s possible to assert that much of what we call quality in urban environment increasingly depends on the economic viability of land development.

The literature suggests that better quality in urban design is likely to be created when private developers decide, or when they are motivated or compelled to produce it as an integral part of their business strategy. Consequently, this raises the question how the public policy can encourage compel this without creating any disciplinary tensions.

Under this premise, the research acknowledges that the contemporary figure of urban designer not only has to have creative skills but also crucially needs to adapt a series of new skills as: understanding of the real estate development process and financial models which feed it; learning innovative public – private arrangements in mastering the skills of negotiation in order to ground their creative skills and achieve the delivery successful spatial results. Therefore this study aims to prove that the good quality in urban areas creates higher economic returns may be a convincing strategy in order to promote the quality of urban design and therefore it questions how urban design can be integrated or connected into the real estate development process which creates the development in our cities.

First what’s meant by the quality is examined and then the question of how it can be achieved. In doing so, the research also has to make necessary references to why the quality matters, which brings the third essential question Why does quality matter?

The examination of what makes the quality in urban environment is scrutinized from the perspective of environmental aesthetics, product design and of the urban design in a decomposing manner in order to understand every single bits and pieces of what globally forms the features of well-designed environments furthermore the time dimension has also been critically considered highlighting the historic evolution of the spatial quality.

In the next step the focus is shifted on the question of how to achieve good urban design analyzing the profession from a procedural point of view. Afterwards the real estate development process is put under scrutiny in order to identify possible disciplinary conflict areas in order to better integrate quality concerns into development process.

Afterwards, the core question ‘Why quality matters?’ is answered by highlighting the dynamics which brought accentuated importance on qualitative aspects of our built environment and the manner in which the spatial quality matters are dealt by the policy makers. A major emphasis is given to devolving role of local governments and stiffening socio economic conditions.

Afterwards, three major case studies will be dealt-with in detail in order to better understand every single bits and pieces of what globally forms the features of well-designed environments. The cases studies are selected from the United Kingdom, United States, and Italy. The development of the case studies summarizes the evolution of spatial quality issues in each context and scrutinizes policy approaches taken by different governments in integrating the spatial quality issues to the urban development process. The following step concentrates on the relationship between the good quality and economic values. The question is handled by making use of an extensive set of case studies highlighting the superior aspects of spatial design and their economic consequences. The case studies are furthermore supported by a seminar and interviews with key actors in several development projects. The findings indicates that the well-maintained urban parks emerge as a common spatial quality denominator based on the subjective judgements of the city-users, developers, and planning officials employed by the public administration. For this reason the research proceeds by placing this spatial quality components to see whether it contributes to creation of higher economic returns.

After having a theoretical confirmation of the economic benefits contributed by urban parks, the next step of the research aims at quantifying this effect in the specific case of Milan, which involves the use of physical-financial modelling experiment, which is experimented on an ongoing urban regeneration project in Milan, known as PII Santa Giulia. The physical-financial model provides a cash flow analysis of the current state of the project. An alternative settlement scheme is prepared by the author paying particular attention to improve visual connection between residential units and the park using the same development parameters (density). Then the financial result of the alternative scheme is calculated using the same model. Results indicate that better distribution of the green areas in the project may lead to a significant differences in the economic value evident in positive changes in gross development value and return on investment. The study suggest the importance of the economic valuation instrument for the public administrations as it’s commonly used by private sector for their decisions.