

AESOP PhD Workshop 2016

Proposal

KU Leuven – Department of Architecture

January 2015



KU LEUVEN

The research groups Planning and Development, OSA and Sint-Lucas of the Department of Architecture of KU Leuven are very proud to apply for hosting the AESOP PhD Workshop 2016. In the tradition of previous successful AESOP PhD workshops, it is our ambition to offer the PhD students an intensive interaction with peers, mentors and tutors to support the development of their research skills and PhD studies. Of course, plenty of opportunities will be provided for establishing contacts among the participants that will endure long after the workshop.

The Local Organizing Committee at KU Leuven suggests that

- **the AESOP PhD Workshop 2016 takes place in the cities of Leuven and Brussels in Belgium.**



- **the AESOP PhD Workshop 2016 is organized in the week from 13 to 17 June 2016.** This time frame seems compatible with the timing of the World Planning Schools Congress in Rio de Janeiro that will place from 3 to 10 July 2016.
- A number of **40 PhD students** seems appropriate for this type of workshop.

The proposal highlights

1. The profile and motivation of KU Leuven and the faculties and department involved in organizing the AESOP PhD workshop 2016
2. The theme and approach of the AESOP PhD workshop 2016
3. The location of the AESOP PhD workshop 2016
4. The Local Organizing Committee of the AESOP PhD workshop 2016.

1. Profile and motivation of KU Leuven, its faculties and department

1.1. Profile

KU Leuven

Situated in the heart of Western Europe, KU Leuven has been a centre of learning for almost six centuries. Founded in 1425 by Pope Martin V, KU Leuven bears the double honour of being the oldest extant Catholic university in the world and the oldest university in the Low Countries. Its academic fame attracted numerous scholars, such as Desiderius Erasmus and Justus Lipsius, who made valuable contributions to European culture.

At present, KU Leuven caters to more than 31,000 students, around 12% of whom are international students from more than 120 nations. In terms of its personnel, there are 5,000 academic staff, 2,750 administrative and technical staff, and 8,000 university hospital staff members. The university hosts fourteen faculties and fifty departments. Top-level research at KU Leuven is evaluated according to international standards and implies interaction, co-operation, and exchange, both of researchers and results. As such, KU Leuven is a charter member of the League of European Research Universities, and European surveys rank KU Leuven among the top ten European universities in terms of scholarly output.

Faculty of Engineering Science and Faculty of Architecture

Education at KU Leuven is organized in faculties. Master and advance master programs relevant to the planning profession are situated in the Faculty of Engineering and in the Faculty of Architecture. Both faculties are part of the same Science, Engineering and Technology Group of KU Leuven.

Besides the bachelor and master program in Architectural Engineering, with Urban Project as a possible option, the **Faculty of Engineering Science** (Campus Leuven) offers two advanced master programs related to urbanism and planning.

- The intensive, one-year program of **Master of Science in Human Settlements (MaHS)** addresses rapid urbanization in the developing world and contemporary urban transformations within the scope of sustainable development. It focuses on issues of housing, building and urban development in a context of development with scarce resources and pressing social and environmental constraints.
- The **Master of Science in Urbanism and Strategic Planning (MaUSP)** is a four-semester academic program which aims to cultivate innovative concepts and strategies for qualitative interventions in urban territories through design, planning, and policies. It prepares students for leadership roles in urban design, urban development and management, and strategic spatial planning, with a special focus on European-wide urban problems. The MaUSP program is part of the European Postgraduate Masters in Urbanism (EMU).

In addition to the bachelor and master program in Architecture, the **Faculty of Architecture** (Campuses Ghent and Brussels) offers an initial program of **Master of Science in Urbanism and Spatial Planning**. This four-semester academic program consists of four main course tracks: spatial analysis; spatial policy and policy delivery; social and ecological aspects; and theory and practice of the planning profession. The program focuses on Flanders and Brussels within a European context and it prepares students for an academic or professional career in government or consultancy in urbanism and spatial planning.

Department of Architecture

The Department of Architecture is responsible for the research regarding architecture, interior architecture, urbanism, human settlements and spatial planning. With over 20 full time professors, 30 guest professors, 25 postdoctoral and 100 other mainly doctoral or associate researchers, this is Flanders' largest research department within the domain of architecture, urbanism and spatial planning. Its ambition is to be internationally at the forefront in the research in these domains. This research pertains to the built environment seen as an artefact that is designed (hence the importance of creativity and aesthetics) but that is at the same time conditioned by historical, cultural, social, political, physical, economic and technological factors. Sustainability, social innovation and an understanding of built space as supporting multiplicity are central elements in its approach. In Flanders the Department of Architecture also aims to be the standard for policy-oriented, applied research and research by design. The explicit goal is and remains to assure that sustainability, social innovation and spatial quality will remain high on the political agenda, both in the near future and in the long run. On an international level, the department aims to lead the way by coordinating European projects, supporting international organizations and promoting the exchange of researchers. In the relatively young research domain of research by design, the department is at the forefront of recent European developments.

Research at the department is clustered in three divisions: Architecture and Society, Architecture and Design, and Architectural engineering. These divisions host specialized research units such as Planning and Development, OSA and the Special Research Unit Sint-Lucas. These research units are the organizers of this PhD workshop. The Planning and Development group hosts on a yearly basis a **PhD module "European Module of Spatial Development Planning"** open to all members of the ESDP network, a network of Planning, Urbanism and Geography Departments in mainly European countries. The module lasts 3 months and includes three course units, a research seminar and guest lectures from scholars from across the world (see <http://esdp-network.eu/em-php/>).

1.2. Motivation

In the past, KU Leuven successfully organized AESOP events, namely the ACSP-AESOP Third Joint Congress in 2003 (8-12 July) and the Head of Schools meeting in 2007. **One major event is missing on the AESOP track record of KU Leuven: the organization of the AESOP PhD Workshop.** With the oncoming World Planning Schools Congress in 2016 in exotic Rio de Janeiro, time has come to fill that gap.

The Faculties and Department applying for organizing the AESOP PhD Workshop stress **the clear link between their own teaching activities and the theme of the World Planning Schools Congress** in Rio de Janeiro: 'Global Crisis, Planning and Challenges to Spatial Justice in the North and in the South'. In the academic year 2015-2016 KU Leuven celebrates the 10th anniversary of the advanced master program in Urbanism and Strategic Planning. This program, and the older advanced master program in Human Settlements, gathers students from all over the world. In these programs students address diverse approaches and themes in planning and urbanism in North and South, such as urbanism and design, spatial planning, human settlements, social innovation, ecological systems, community development and land tenure systems. The academic staff is multidisciplinary and has an international profile in research, teaching and policy advice.

The academic staff is **experienced in tutoring PhD researchers** which is undoubtedly valuable to the quality of the PhD workshop methodological and thematic foci. Furthermore, the Department of Architecture can count on a frequent availability of foreign researchers and teachers and a continuous presence of a worldwide community of PhD researchers.

- The Department is closely involved in the **European Module on Spatial Development Planning** (EMSDP: <http://esdp-network.eu/em-php/>) with over 200 alumni over the last 20 years. The EMSDP addresses spatial development dynamics and planning issues – including urban and regional plan-making, programmes and policies – from an interdisciplinary perspective that lies at the crossroads of economics, sociology, spatial planning and design, geography, political science, urbanism and ecology. Students are empowered to enhance their command of the theoretical debate in various disciplines and to improve their methodological skills, through the constant interaction among themselves and with the staff members. The EMSDP network received the AESOP prize for teaching excellence in 2012.
- The Department is also involved in **ARENA, a network for European architectural research**. This network offers a shared platform that aims to promote, support, develop and disseminate high-quality research in all fields of architecture in the widest sense, including its links to building technology, environmental design, sustainable development, interior design, landscape architecture and urban design/urbanism, operating in domains from science and technology through to arts and humanities. One of the objectives of the network is to support beginning researchers and PhD students in the field of architecture in improving the quality of their research. In the framework of ARENA, KU Leuven hosted the **2nd international Architecture Research Moment** at which early-stage researchers, doctoral students and post-docs are able to present their research project to experienced architectural researchers.
- In 2009, the Department also organized the **5th International PhD Seminar-Urbanism & Urbanization** ‘Transcending the discipline Urbanism & Urbanization as receptors of multiple practices, discourses and realities’. The seminar invited PhD researchers working in the discipline of urbanism and encouraged contributions that highlighted its multi and interdisciplinary nature. The seminar focused on multiple approaches – from historic enquiry to project-led analysis – and covered a wide range of spaces and scales – from territories to neighborhoods, from landscapes to cityscapes. In particular, it aimed at [re]positioning urbanism vis-à-vis its historical Western biases, looking at postcolonial theory in particular and inquiring urbanization processes in the Global South.

Finally, in recent years academic staff and researchers of the Department of Architecture have conducted **several high-quality research projects with relevance to planning and urbanism in the North and the South**. The knowhow from these research projects is an asset of the local mentors of the AESOP PhD workshop, as an addition to the knowhow of the invited tutors (see 2.2). A few projects illustrate this experience and potential.

- The SP2SP research project (coordinated by P&D, finalized in 2010) bridged the gap between spatial planners and designers on the one hand and political decision-makers and implementation actors on the other hand by making planning more project and action oriented as well as socially innovative.
- The overall aim of the SPINDUS research project (coordinated by P&D; 2009-2013) is the development of practical and pedagogical planning and design methodologies to assess,

evaluate and implement spatial quality. Its strategic focus is on the broadening of the concept of spatial quality through an interdisciplinary (involving different research disciplines in a shared methodology) and transdisciplinary (involving different types of users) approach.

- The INDIGO project (coordinated by P&D; 2015-2018) is an inter- and transdisciplinary project, which puts the scientific debate and collective practice of shared land uses, land property and use rights within the inter and transdisciplinary context of ownership regimes and the 'governance of the commons'. The project explores conceptually, empirically and practically the use of differentiated ownership and governance modes, with the purpose of bypassing the dichotomy between private and public ownership through innovative and more articulated institutional forms.
- The Short Training Initiative 'Co-producing ecological urbanism for inclusive housing transformations' (coordinated by OSA; finished in July 2015) expects to train environmental planners in Ecuador to link ecological restoration and management with equitable city-making and housing provision. Indeed, the emergence of ecological mega-projects in the global South is undeniable, and their implementation is all but smooth if social inclusion is not guaranteed. The project *Guayaquil Ecologico* is a case in point, since even the important objective of increasing the index of green area/inhabitant may be obscured by forced relocation of approximately 30,000 vulnerable dwellers living in the densely populated *Estero Salado* estuary. The impact of the training initiative will be made obvious by the gained competence to use the performative capacity of existing human settlements and ecological conditions as the starting point for proposing innovative and sustainable interplays of urbanization, landscape and infrastructure.

1.3. Organisational capacity of KU Leuven and Department

KU Leuven yearly organizes a high number of events, congresses and workshops. But also the Department of Architecture has a broad experience in organizing events. A short anthology of such initiatives should be sufficient prove of the organisational capacity of the Department.

- **ACSP-AESOP Third Joint Congress (8-12 July 2003) 'The Network Society: The New Context for Planning'**. The congress theme provided the opportunity to address a wide range of topics that became crucial in the planning domain at that time. Contributors dealt with questions of contemporary organization of social, economic, cultural, political, and physical spaces and centred their arguments on the notion that social and physical networks transform the way in which planned cities and regions are viewed.
- **Annual Conference of the Regional Studies Association (6-8 April 2009) 'Understanding and Shaping Regions: Spatial, Social and Economic Futures'**. The conference followed the traditional structure of RSA conferences with a mix of plenary sessions interspersed with roundtables, special sessions and workshop sessions running in parallel gateways. The subject areas went from regional to urban foci, and from regional and local development to spatial planning themes.
- **5th International PhD Seminar-Urbanism & Urbanization (1-3 October 2009) 'Transcending the discipline Urbanism & Urbanization as receptors of multiple practices, discourses and realities'** (already mentioned in 1.2).
- **Conference of the European Architectural History Network (31 May-3 June 2012) 'Court Residences in Early Modern Europe (1400-1700). Architecture, Ceremony, and International Relations'**. This conference was hosted jointly by Belgian Universities and Architecture Schools.

Members of the Department of Architecture were in the scientific and organizing committees. Over 400 abstracts were submitted in response to the call for papers, of which 140 were accepted. The conference was accompanied by lunch tours and regional tours.

- **2nd international Architecture Research Moment (30-31 January 2015)** (already mentioned in 1.2).

1.4. Financial capability of KU Leuven and Department

At this moment, it is estimated that an **attendance fee of 350 euro** per participant (400 euro for a participant from a non AESOP-member school) will cover most of the expenses, such as accommodation and subsistence.

Next, **external sponsors**, such as the Flemish government, the government of the Brussels Capital Region and the Province of Vlaams-Brabant, will be requested for cofunding.

The KU Leuven as organization, and the Department as a part of this organization, have sufficient financial capability to address limited deficits.

2. Theme and approach of the AESOP PhD workshop 2016

2.1. Theme 'Planning and Urbanism Research in a Global World'

The call for hosting the AESOP PhD workshop asks for a *clear link* between the theme of the workshop and that of the World Planning School Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, i.e. "Global Crisis, Planning and Challenges to Spatial Justice in the North and in the South". The Department of Architecture has reflected on this question and has come up with the following two orientations for the PhD workshop.

- The prior aim of the workshop is to assist and guide researchers in the starting phase or a more advanced stage of their PhD research on methodological and substantive issues. The focus of the workshop is on 'doing research', on addressing planning and urbanism issues in a scientifically grounded way. Plenary lectures and activities as well as parallel discussion and tutoring sessions will guarantee a balanced combination of methodology and content.

Accordingly, two types of experienced academics will assist the participants in small groups during the workshop. Tutors will be responsible for the assistance on substantive themes. Mentors will provide the participants assistance on methodological issues.

- **The Local Organising Committee of the PhD workshop specifically targets participants who are doing PhD research about planning and urbanism issues that are relevant to both the North and the South. The Committee suggests that the researchers will have to elaborate briefly on this relevance in their application for the PhD workshop. In any case, in addition to the normal scientific criteria, this will be a major criterion for admission of the candidates.**

Combining the focus on 'doing research' and the 'relevance of issues for the North and the South' has led to the following theme for the workshop: **'PLANNING AND URBANISM RESEARCH IN A GLOBAL WORLD'.**

In the call for participants, the Local Organising Committee suggests already to name potential themes, such as

- Informality in human settlements
- Environmental Justice
- Ecological Crises and Social Resilience
- Participation in planning, design and community building
- Land Tenure Systems
- Research by Design addressing particular dimensions of urban crisis.

2.2. Workshop approach with tutors (content) and mentors (methodology)

As indicated before, the ambition is to assist the participants of the PhD Workshop on both substantive and methodological issues of doing PhD research.

Tutors

Invited tutors will be addressing mainly the substantive issues, although they will also bring in methodological know how as they are professionally involved in academic scholarship. Each group of 6 participants will have its own tutor who will also facilitate the group discussion. Two of the tutors will also be asked to give an inspiring plenary lecture on the way he or she has recently addressed a certain substantive planning or urbanism research issue that is relevant to the North and the South.

The Department of Architecture launched a call for tutors among the members of the European Spatial Development Planning network. At this moment, already a number of top academics have committed themselves to attend the PhD Workshop as a tutor: Louis Albrechts (KU Leuven, Belgium), Alessandro Balducci (Politecnico di Milano, Italy), Stuart Cameron (Newcastle University, United Kingdom), Jean Hillier (RMIT University, Australia), Diana MacCallum (Curtin University, Australia), Flavia Martinelli (Università degli Studi Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria, Italy), Artur da Rosa Pires (Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal) and Serena Vicari (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, Italy). The final selection of tutors will be made, based on the themes that will be addressed in the abstracts of the selected participants. Some of the mentors will also act as (methodology) mentors.

Mentors

At least one mentor per group will be assisting the group discussions, on methodological issues, and in cooperation with the tutor. Two of the mentors will also give an inspiring lecture on how he or she has addressed a general methodological issue of planning or urbanism research.

Potential themes for these lectures are the use of theoretical frameworks in planning research, the integration of research by design in academic research, the dissemination and publication of research results, the usefulness of strategic research for governmental use, ... A final selection of topics will be made in dialogue with the YA Network representative in the Local Organizing Committee.

The mentors are all linked to the Department of Architecture of KU Leuven: Viviana d'Auria, Pascal De Decker, Bruno De Meulder, Hans Leinfelder, Frank Moulaert and Jan Schreurs. During the final plenary session of the PhD workshop, the round table evaluation, Frank Moulaert will make an overall reflection on substantive and methodological issues that were raised during the group discussions.

Help desk

Two members of the department staff, Loris Servillo and Karel Wuytack, will be available during the entire PhD workshop to assist the participants in their specific needs and questions.

2.3. First outline of workshop program

Day 1 (Leuven)

Afternoon	Registration and Welcome Plenary session I: Welcome and get to know
Evening	Welcome Reception

Day 2 (Leuven)

Morning	Plenary session II: 1 presentation on methodology Parallel session I: 2 * 20'-presentation and discussion
Afternoon	Parallel session II: 2 * 20' presentation and discussion Plenary session III: 1 presentation on content
Evening	City walk Dinner

Day 3 (Leuven)

Morning	Plenary Session IV: 1 presentation on methodology Parallel session III: 2 * 20' presentation and discussion
Afternoon	Parallel session IV: 2 * 20' presentation and discussion Bike tour or walk along the river Dijle
Evening	Social event

Day 4 (Brussels)

Morning	Train to Brussels North Guided field trip to Brussels North quarter
Early afternoon	Plenary Session V: round table evaluation

The parallel sessions are the core of the AESOP PhD Workshop. PhD students will be invited to present their paper to the other 7 group members, the tutor and the mentor. Full papers will be distributed before the workshop and each student will commit him(her)self to read and provide feedback to another student paper. Tutors and mentors will guide the discussion and also provide methodological or substantive feedback.

2.4. Inviting PhD students from the South?

The participation of PhD students from the South would offer a mirror for PhD researchers of European schools of planning to reflect on the do's and don'ts of academic research in the South. Furthermore, it would create a forum for a more profound debate on the orientation of PhD research for the South.

Therefore, the Department of Architecture suggests to the Council of Representatives of AESOP to open up the call for participants to academic planning school networks in the South and to actively stimulate their participation in the AESOP PhD Workshop by providing a sufficient amount of bursaries. Selecting 5 PhD researchers from the South would make it possible to have one researcher from the South in each discussion group.

3. Location of the AESOP PhD Workshop 2016

3.1. Accessibility and accommodation capacity

Accessibility

The cities of Brussels and Leuven are easily accessible by plane or train.

The international airport of Brussels (Brussels Airport) is situated between Brussels and Leuven and has a direct regular train connection with both cities. It takes 15 minutes by train from the airport to Leuven.

All international trains, including the Thalys to Paris and the Eurostar to London, have stops in Brussels. It takes approximately 30 minutes by train from Brussels to Leuven.

Attractive accommodation

The PhD workshop will take place in the cities of Leuven (3 days) and Brussels (1 day).

In Leuven, the Department of Architecture is exploring the possibility to organize the PhD Workshop in **STUK, the arts centre in the middle of the city**. STUK has a number of rooms for congresses, workshops, lectures, debates and receptions. All rooms have wireless internet.



The Department will also make use of the university accommodation at the **Arenberg campus** in Leuven where new and ancient buildings form make an inspiring landscape..



The final session of the PhD workshop will take place at the **campus Sint-Lucas, right in the centre of the Brussels North quarter**. Before this session, the participants of the PhD workshop will discover Brussels north as a multicultural melting pot where North and South meet on a daily basis.



As it is still examination period at KU Leuven at the moment of the PhD workshop, it is impossible to provide accommodation in the KUL residences. Leuven has a large number of **low budget but qualitative youth hostels and hotels**. Accommodation at walking distance of STUK and the city centre will be reserved as soon as the AESOP decision about allocating the organization of the PhD workshop will be made.

4. Local Organizing Committee of the AESOP PhD Workshop 2016

Once the decision about the organization of the PHD workshop is taken, the following Local Organizing Committee will be formally installed.

- **Chair:** Frank Moolaert, full professor at KU Leuven and visiting professor at Newcastle University
- **Co-organiser Finance:** Jan Schreurs, associate professor at KU Leuven
- **Contact person and workshop coordinator:** Hans Leinfelder, assistant professor at KU Leuven
- **Scientific advisors:** Viviana d'Auria, assistant professor at KU Leuven; Pascal De Decker, associate professor at KU Leuven; Bruno De Meulder, full professor at KU Leuven; Hilde Heynen, full professor at KU Leuven.
- **Help desk representatives:** Loris Antonio Servillo, researcher at KU Leuven; Karel Wuytack, researcher and lecturer at KU Leuven
- **YA network representative**
- **YA network website officer** (if this is not covered by the YA representative).
- **Secretarial Staff of Department of Architecture**

It is also this Local Organizing Committee that will be responsible, together with the tutors and mentors, to select the PhD students to be invited to the workshop.