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Francesca Gelli, Ph.D. in Regional Planning and Public Policies (2000), background studies in Music (degree, 1993) and Architecture (5-year degree, 1995), is researcher and Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University IUAV of Venice (Faculty of Planning), where she has been teaching Policy Analysis & Public Administration since 2006. Coordinator of a research-programme on "Instruments and Strategies of Internalisation of Cities" (granted by European Social Fund), in 2008 she promoted the constitution of an interdisciplinary research unit made up of young researchers working on the same topic, with a specific focus on universities as local actors of cities' internationalisation. At IUAV she is also a member of the Ph.D. scientific committee in Regional Planning and Public Policies, and is in charge of the Erasmus and Socrates Faculty Programmes. She is currently Senior Fellow at the Institut für Politikwissenschaft Justus-Liebig-Universität, Politische Italienforschung-PIFO, Gießen.

She is author of books, chapters and articles on democratic theory and federalism, city governance, Italian local politics, EU public policies, qualitative methods of research. Ongoing work related to her main areas of expertise focuses on: 1) urban power structures; more specifically, it examines the contributions of American Political Science to the elaboration of political theories based on study of the city, and in particular how these studies are useful to the understanding of urban political processes in our cities today; 2) a comparative research on the quality of democracy in Italian cities; 3) case-study research (in Italy and U.S.A) on University-Community partnerships for local development and urban regeneration.

From 2000 to 2002 she was Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of Padua (Department of Political Studies), carrying out a research programme on "The governance of Cities and Regions in Europe: a new frontier of democratic development", and Scientific coordinator of a research programme on: "The Universities as policy actors of local development". Between 1999 and 2001, with E. Milanese, Scientific Coordinator of the research programme "From government to governance: which consequences and planning opportunities?" (granted by the Italian Ministry of Education funds, Padua and Venice University research funds). As a Research Fellow at the Department of Planning, IUAV (2003-6), she studied the impacts of EU policies on domestic EU Member States, observing the implementation of local democracy development projects in South-Eastern Countries. Between 1998 and 2002 she carried out various empirical and theoretical research programmes in the U.S.A., thanks to several research stays and grants (at the Department of City and Regional Planning, at the Institute of Urban and Regional Planning and at The University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum, UCB, CA; at the Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government, Lafayette College, Easton, PA). In particular she has developed case studies on participatory and deliberative public policies and several works on theoretical aspects of federalism.

Between 2001 and 2006 she also carried out courses at various Universities in Italy: “EU Public Policies” (University of Padua), “Policy Analysis” (University IUAV of Venice), “Theories of Social Planning” (University of Lecce), “Urban Policies” (University of Trento), “Theory of the State and civil society” (University of Trieste).

As a policy adviser, she has assisted many Regional and Municipal Administrations, Political Bodies, in particular with researches related to EU programmes implementation, and urban and social policies.