

# URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## DIST - HYPERScapes\_3

<b>Funded By</b>	Dipartimento DIST
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<b>Context of the research activity</b>	This study explores emerging forms of urbanity shaped by large-scale infrastructure projects in various areas of the planet. It aims to uncover the challenge these projects pose to urban planning and design, highlighting the transformative power of infrastructure in shaping landscapes, cities, and urban environments.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>We invite applications for a fully funded 3-year PhD position within the project “HyperSCAPES: Extreme infrastructure projects and emerging forms of urbanity in the Anthropocene” (Principal investigator: Leonardo Ramondetti), an international research initiative examining the new forms of urbanities and living conditions resulting from the deployment of large-scale infrastructural projects. The selected PhD candidate will explore urban transformations triggered by major infrastructure projects – how they reshape urban landscapes, social dynamics, and environments – and their implications for urban planning and design.</p> <p>As a PhD researcher, you will become part of an interdisciplinary team, including two other PhD candidates and three postdoctoral researchers, working together to tackle one of the most pressing challenges in contemporary urban studies.</p> <p><b>Research Focus and Objectives:</b></p> <p>Over the past decade, large-scale infrastructure projects have rapidly transformed the planet, shaping new landscapes, environments, and living practices. While these projects are often framed as engines of development, they also contribute to resource over-exploitation, social inequalities, and uneven urbanisations. Despite these impacts, research has primarily focused on engineering the space, finding remedial solutions, and mitigating social issues. The crux of the problem remains: How can planning and design activities steer large-scale infrastructural projects toward a more sustainable and just development?</p> <p>This PhD research will contribute to understand the spatialisation and to develop a new propositional approach for urban planning and design. The core objectives include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing a theoretical framework to analyse emerging forms of urbanization driven by large-scale infrastructure.</li> <li>2. Conducting mapping analysis and ethnographic fieldwork to document spatial and societal transformations.</li> <li>3. Proposing strategies for urban planning and design, leading to agenda-</li> </ol>

	<p>setting publications in urban studies and planning scholarship.</p> <p>The proposed areas of interest for the research are the Adriatic Region, Central China, and the Atacama Desert – though these locations may be adjusted based on preliminary findings.</p> <p>Methodology and Research Approach</p> <p>This project adopts an interdisciplinary approach, bridging spatial planning, urban studies and design. The successful candidate will employ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical mapping and spatial analysis at regional and local levels.</li> <li>- Field-based ethnographic research.</li> <li>- Visual methods, such as photography and video documentation, to critically interpret urban transformations.</li> <li>- Policy analysis, to position findings within broader governance and planning debates.</li> </ul> <p>Additional funding is available to support fieldwork and research visits at partner universities.</p>
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<p><b>Skills and competencies for the development of the activity</b></p>	<p>We are looking for highly motivated candidates with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A strong interest in urbanism, planning and design.</li> <li>- Research experience in architecture, urban design, urban studies, or related fields.</li> <li>- Critical and analytical thinking skills, with the ability to engage with interdisciplinary methodologies; and experience in visual methods (mapping, photography, videomaking).</li> <li>- The ability to work both independently and within a collaborative team.</li> <li>- A willingness to conduct fieldwork and research stays abroad.</li> </ul>
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