

**Call for application for research scholarships
for post-graduate international candidates**

RESEARCH PROJECT N. 17

Title

The complexity of maps performed by information and systemic design

Scientific responsible (name, surname, role)

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Short description of the research activity (max 250 words)

The **design research project aims at exploring the political, cultural, technological and environmental consequences of making visual maps**. Despite being often perceived as 'neutral' and 'scientific' tools, maps are epistemologically consequential instruments and ideology carriers. Therefore, understanding a map does not only mean understanding all the information mapped on it, but also, and more importantly, **understanding the author, the context and the motives behind each design choice**. In addition, understanding a map in the 21st century entails studying the changes in their administration: old atlases and paper charts are currently being replaced by digital tools, where frame, position and scale are no longer design aspects decided by the mapmaker, but they can be endlessly reconfigured by the user himself. Another notable aspect is the replacement of legends and colours coding with satellite, reducing the gap between graphical representations and reality itself.

The **main goal** is to detect, and unmask, **political, cultural, technological and environmental context** in which maps operate.

The **research methodology** consists in analyzing historical and contemporary maps in order to map tools by means of archival and online research. Then, the research activity focuses on defining particular case studies deemed important for their historical and political aspects.

The **design research project** consists in exploring parallel tracks around maps' political, cultural, technological and environmental consequences, combining a theoretical and reflective study with a hands-on, and experimental type of research.

The **output** is promising for the design scientific community, enlarging the interested towards the **information design with a systemic approach**.

Specific requirements (experiences, skills)

In order to complete the research project, it is necessary to possess good knowledge in the fields of both **graphic/information design** and **cartography**. This knowledge should be paired with a **sufficient understanding of GIS** and **other geographic information tools**, which represent the state-of-the-art technologies regarding mapmaking. Finally, a **self-reflective and critical approach** towards the **design field** is necessary in order to question the design tools and processes involved the making of maps, especially related to **complexity theories** and **systemic design**.

Website of the research group (if any)

<http://areeweb.polito.it/designstories/>

others related link: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/retrace/>

<http://www.systemicdesign.org/>

The present form should be filled in English and sent to scudo@polito.it by 2nd October 2017

<http://www.systemicdesign4water.polito.it/>

<http://www.systemsdesign.polito.it/>

Keywords (min 3, max 6)

Sustainability; Graphic Design; Map; Cartography; Politics; Information Design

Research Area (max 1)

Design