

PhD in Urban and Regional Development

(jointly activated by Università degli Studi di Torino and Politecnico di Torino)

Research Title: China's Go Out Strategy. Spatial impact and Policy Implications

Funded by	Dipartimento Interateneo di Scienze, Progetto e Politiche del Territorio (DIST) / Politecnico di Torino
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Context of the research activity	<p>China it's the third country in the world of territorial extension, and the first in terms of inhabitants, alone accounting for almost 20% of the World's population. Being characterised by a prevalently rural economy until the end of WWII, the development policies undertaken under centrally planned economy and then under a more market-oriented mixed economy boosted the country's development exponentially, transforming it in the fastest growing economy in the world.</p> <p>Since the second half of the 1990s the country had started to employ its reserves by acquiring assets overseas. This action has been quickly contextualised into the so-called China "Go Out Policy", through which the national government has introduced several schemes to assist domestic companies in investing abroad. Throughout the years, this action progressively acquired a spatial dimension, with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013 by the Chinese president Xi Jinping and aiming at promoting infrastructural and economic development in a large number of countries in Asia, Africa as well as in Europe.</p> <p>As a consequence, China has become the first country in the world to conceive and implement territorial development strategies and programmes focussing on territories that, in their greatest share, are located outside its national boundaries. Estimates list the BRI as the largest (territorial) development policy in history, covering more than 68 countries, including 65% of the world's population and 40% of the global GDP as of 2017. Despite the obvious relevance, its implications in terms of territorial development and policy-</p>

	<p>making have not yet been explored systematically in research, nor exists an analysis of its spatial impacts in the cities and regions where its investments land.</p> <p>As China's influence targets nowadays numerous territories around the world, including countries located right at the border of and even within the European Union (as for instance the Western Balkan Region, the New Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, but also Germany and Italy), a systematic understanding of the logics, mechanisms and practices of China's Go Out policy represents a crucial research goal, also in relation to the future of the EU territorial development and policy-making.</p>
Objectives	<p>Positioning within the contextual frame described above, the proposed doctoral activity aims at engaging a motivated Ph.D. student with the study of the logics, mechanisms and impacts of China's spatial action outside its own national territory, and in particular on the European continent. The study will build upon consolidated methodologies commonly used in the field of comparative urban and regional studies to produce a comprehensive representation of the spatial dimension of China Go Out strategy, that focuses on (i) the multiple logics behind the latter, (ii) the countries that targets and the objective it bears in relation to each of them, (ii) the main tools adopted for their achievement and (iv) the practical implementation of the strategy and its development and spatial impacts, to be explored through a number of selected case studies in different countries in Europe. Moreover, beside the empirical results that will be produced through the study, the latter also aims at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triggering a further methodological advancement in the research fields touched upon, also thanks to the study of the interaction, on a specific territory, of domestic and external spatial planning influences; • Contributing to pave the way for the analysis of a rather unexplored area of the Europeanization debate, i.e. the actual impact of the influence of China's action over EU conditionality within and outside its boundaries.
Skills and competencies for the development of the activity	<p>The applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • graduated from a M.Sc. programme focussing on spatial planning, urban and regional studies or related disciplines; • demonstrate an education record and research experience in the field of urban and regional studies and spatial planning from a comparative perspective; • possess excellent English language skills (in terms of reading, writing and communication); • is open to spend long-term research period abroad. <p>Research experience on, as well as knowledge of territorial governance and spatial planning in China would constitute an asset,</p>

	<p>and so will the knowledge of Chinese language. Similarly, priority will be given to those applicants demonstrating education record or research experience in the field of so-called “global urbanism”.</p>
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