

Alberto Valz Gris

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Currently		<p>Post-doctoral Research Fellow Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning Politecnico di Torino viale Mattioli 39 10125 Torino Italy</p>
Research interests		<p>I am an urban geographer working at the intersection of heterodox economic geography and urban political ecology. My research investigates emerging patterns of urbanization through the shifting geographies of production. As such, my main research interests are rooted in the dynamics of extended urbanization, in the geographies of natural resource extraction and logistical reconfiguration, and in their associated socioecological shifts.</p>
Education	2017–2021	<p>Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Development, Cum laude Thesis: Hinterlands of the Green Transition. Atacama, Lithium and the Extended Geographies of the Zero-emission City Politecnico di Torino, Italy</p>
	2014–2016	<p>MA in Fine Arts Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam, The Netherlands</p>
	2014	<p>Erasmus Thesis Scholarship Universitat de Barcelona, Spain</p>
	2011–2014	<p>Ms.C. in Architecture, Construction, City, 110/110 Thesis: Barcelona’s Interstices, Opening up Architectural Practice Politecnico di Torino, Italy</p>
	2011	<p>LLP/Erasmus Semester Scholarship École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture Paris La Villette, France</p>
	2009–2012	<p>BA in Architecture Sciences, 106/110 Thesis: Osservare dal Parco. Un Progetto di Trasformazione per il Parco del Meisino Politecnico di Torino, Italy</p>
Research	2024–now	<p>The new Italian geographies of logistics Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning (DIST), Politecnico di Torino Post-doctoral research fellow. Principal investigator: prof. C. Salone [Project description]</p>
	2023–now	<p>The financialised city? Milano: geografie finanziarie, geopolitica urbana e questione abitativa Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning (DIST), Politecnico di Torino Post-doctoral research fellow. Principal investigator: prof. F. Governa This project explores the financialization of urban development, particularly in Milan after the 2008 financial crisis. Milan’s transformation aligns with global trends, featuring strategic urban planning to position the city as a global hub. This involves initiatives like urban regeneration, major events, and population attraction, driving symbolic projects and substantial investments. This study charts a multiscalar network involving diverse actors and objectives, examining theoretical aspects (urban geopolitics, state role, societal impacts) and empirical dimensions (financial architectures, strategies, and specific area transformations like Porta Romana). Milan’s case contributes to international observations, depicting financialization as a multi-faceted, contradictory process with diverse actors beyond financial institutions. This research aims to illuminate Milan’s urban dynamics, considering geopolitical implications and societal impacts, thus expanding the understanding of financialization in urban development globally.</p>
	2022–2024	<p>Rescaling the Belt and Road Initiative Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning (DIST), Politecnico di Torino Post-doctoral research fellow. Principal investigator: prof. F. Governa This research program, financed by the PRIN project “Rescaling the Belt and Road Initiative: urbanisation processes, innovation patterns and global investments in urban China”, seeks to construct a dialogue between the international debate on Global Urbanism and the urban experience of Southern Europe. Global Urbanism emerges as the attempt to build critical urban knowledge starting from the grounded acknowledgment of differences and their continuous mutations. Through this project, we propose to explore the question of a global urban horizon starting from the specificities and differences of various Southern European urban experiences, hence attempting theory building from peripheral loci. In its initial phases, the program will consist in the critical analysis of existing research, in a selection of three case studies and in their subsequent exploration through short fieldwork periods.</p>
	2022–now	<p>Umru: Fragments from the Hydrosocial Cycle of Valle Umbra Mahler & LeWitt Studios Residency, Spoleto Geographer in residence. This project is developed in collaboration with visual artist Cecilia Ceccherini and part of Mahler and LeWitt Studios’ Materia program. As a collaborative practice bridging geography with the visual arts, the projects maps an embodied and effective exploration of water assemblages of the Valle Umbra, asking how we might reinvent hydrosocial territories and shape them towards a more conscious and environmentally just future. Working in the form of text, sound and textile, the results of this research will be presented in June 2024 as part of Spoleto’s Festival dei Due Mondi through an exhibition and an associated independent publication.</p>
	2022	<p>I paesaggi operazionali nel Nord Italia. Geografie mobili, strategie spaziali e mappe dinamiche dell’urbanizzazione regionale Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DAStU), Politecnico di Milano Research consultant. Principal investigator: prof. S. Armondi Which dynamics are reconfiguring those territories of production, circulation and support that exists in relation to large urban concentrations? This project—enabled by funding for original research by the Politecnico di Milano—critically investigates the geographies of operational landscapes in Northern Italian regions with three main goals. Firstly, it aims at tracing emergent economic geographies by updating their interpretive frameworks, cartographic representations and challenging impending urban dynamics. Secondly, it seeks to describe the plurality of policies,</p>

actors and strategies that remake urban contexts and territorial configurations; thirdly, it proposes to build evidence and spatial representations that support the activity of planners and policymakers with respect to the shifting dynamics of global production. In its initial phases, the project involves quantitative modeling, spot cartographic analysis and semi-structured interviews as a focus on case studies spanning the width of Northern Italian regions.

2021

Dream Story. Urban modernity through Italy and China

Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning (DIST), Politecnico di Torino

Research assistant. Principal investigator: prof. F. Governa

The project forms part of the activities financed by the PRIN project Rescaling the Belt and Road Initiative: urbanisation processes, innovation patterns and global investments in urban China, and consists in the design and production of an international exhibition and a multi-media catalog on the theme of urban modernities. Drawing on an openly comparative approach to patterns of urbanization, this research explores the emergence of multiple urban modernities by observing them through two apparently unrelated waves of urbanization: that of postwar Italy and that of contemporary China. My involvement in the project consists in supporting the curatorial team by critically selecting case studies and producing both theoretical, archival and field-based research on the driving themes of the exhibition.

2017-2021

Hinterlands of the green transition. Atacama, lithium and the extended geographies of the zero-emission city

Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning (DIST), Politecnico di Torino

Ph.D. candidate. Tutor: prof. F. Governa

This doctoral dissertation project explores the dynamics of lithium extraction on the Atacama plateau as an analytical move to understand flows of urban metabolism between cities and hinterlands at the planetary scale. Combining theoretical frameworks from the areas of critical urban studies, economic geography and urban political ecology, the project deepens our understanding of the persisting extractivism of urban green transitions. This argument has been developed through the deployment of ethnographic fieldwork in Argentina and Chile, document and cartographic analysis and visual methodologies. The completion of the project has involved autonomous research design, the organization and fulfillment of international fieldwork and a sustained program of discussion in international conferences and seminars.

2017

Cittadella di Alessandria: Scenari di riuso adattivo

Department of Architecture and Design (DAD), Politecnico di Torino

Research assistant. Principal investigator: prof. M. Robiglio

This research was commissioned by Compagnia di San Paolo with the goal of investigating scenarios of adaptive reuse for the Cittadella di Alessandria, a military complex dating to the second half of the Seventeenth century, beyond its current state of under-utilization. The involvement of my expertise in the project consists in the spatial analysis of existing architectural structures and a qualitative survey around the existing use strategies of the Cittadella as an architectural and environmental complex. The latter has involved the organization and fulfillment of a short ethnographic program that worked as a springboard for designing scenarios of adaptive reuse.

Publications

A list is also available [online](#).

Journal articles

2024

Valz Gris, A. (forthcoming). Estrattivismo e urbanizzazione: disuguaglianze e conflitti nell'inserimento strategico del Salar de Olaroz. **Rivista Geografica Italiana - Open Access**

2023

Valz Gris, A. (2023). Beyond the boom. Genealogies of corridor urbanism in the making of the Lithium Triangle, Argentina and Chile. **Geoforum**, **147**, 103913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103913>

2022

Valz Gris, A. (2022). Cosco e l'urbanizzazione «turbolenta» del porto del Pireo. **Territorio**, **103**, 31-36. <https://doi.org/10.3280/TR2023-103003>

2022

Valz Gris, A., Iacovone, C., Safina, A., Pollio, A., Governa, F. (2022) Il 'campo' geografico di un'etnografia sottile. **Rivista Geografica Italiana - Open Access**, **1**(1), 5-31. <https://doi.org/10.3280/rigioa1-2022oa13364>

2020

Iacovone, C., Valz Gris, A., Safina, A., Pollio, A., Governa, F. (2021) Breaking the distance: Dialogues of care in a time of limited geographies. **Dialogues in Human Geography**, **10**(2), 124-127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820620934940>

2019

Valz Gris, A. (2019) Tangling a bi-oceanic corridor. **Lo Squaderno**, **51**, 17-20.

Book chapters

2020

Valz Gris, A. (2020) Logistica e urbanizzazione: Uno sguardo dal corridoio bi-oceanico. In Benvegnù, C., Cuppini, N., Frapporti, M., Milesi, F., Pirone, M. (Eds.), **Logistica e America Latina** (pp.174-182). Bologna: Dipartimento delle Arti, Università di Bologna. <https://doi.org/10.6092/unibo/amsacta/6434>

2019

Valz Gris, A. (2019) Appunti su città e piattaforma. Dentro e oltre la metafora. In **Il Campo di Battaglia Urbano** (pp. 95-103). Roma: Red Star Press.

Datasets

2023

Valz Gris, A. (2023) Frontiere della Transizione Energetica. Un database cartografico sui permessi di ricerca per materie prime critiche in Italia. (1.0.0) [Data set]. [frontieredellatransizione.it](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10058425), <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10058425>

Conference proceedings

2024

Bandiera, M., Loi, M., & Valz Gris, A. (forthcoming). Racconti dai margini dell'urbanizzazione: Appunti per una geografia rurale. In IV Edizione delle Giornate di Studi interdisciplinari "GEOGRAFIA E..." - **Geografia e Ecologia Politica, Milano**.

2022

Valz Gris, A. (2022) Il paesaggio operativo del Salar de Olaroz (Argentina): Disuguaglianze e conflitti spaziali delle catene globali del valore. In Amato, F., Amato, V., de Falco, S. La Foresta, D. Simonetti, L. (Eds.), **Catene/Chains, Memorie Geografiche**, **21**, 43-48.

2018

Valz Gris, A. (2018) Lavoro, spazio, movimenti. Mobilitare l'urbano dentro e oltre il capitalismo delle piattaforme. In Zaar, M., Capel, H. (Eds.) **Las Ciencias Sociales y la Edificación de una Sociedad Postcapitalista**. Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona/Geocrítica.

Book reviews

2020

Valz Gris, A. (2020) City air beyond the city: Can the planetary mine lead us to emancipatory urban futures? **City**, **24**(5-6), 865-870. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2020.1833547>

Public writing

2020

Valz Gris, A., Iacovone, C. (2020) Il virus è un prodotto del Capitalocene. **Jacobin Italia**. Available at

Teaching	2022-2023	<p>Socially Engaged Art Winter Project Accademia Unidee, Biella and ArtEZ Academy, Arnhem</p> <p>Course leader This academic year, the annual exchange with MA Fine Arts students of the ArtEZ academy explored the theme of the Mediterranean as an imagined geography, as a represented and contested space. Coordinating the didactic environment of a mixed group of BA and MA students in Biella involved giving group lectures and individual project development tutorials, culminating in a collective exhibition during ArtEZ Project Festival in the city of Arnhem.</p>
	2022-2023	<p>Tecniche di rappresentazione dello spazio Accademia Unidee, Biella</p> <p>Course leader Teaching this semester-long course to first-year BA students in Fine Arts for the Environment involved designing the course syllabus, planning and giving lectures on the fundamentals of cartography, photography and sketching, followed by tutorials on the development of an individual project. Finals exams consisted in the making of an exhibition showing the work developed throughout the course.</p>
	2020-2021	<p>Fattori ambientali e geografici dello sviluppo del territorio Department of Regional and Urban Studies (DIST), Politecnico di Torino</p> <p>Teaching assistant. Course held by prof. M. Santangelo Activities completed in this course have consisted in sessions of territorial analysis highlighting the role of physical geography in shaping patterns of urbanization and the making of moving- image materials across the design site for supporting the students' activities.</p>
	2020-2021	<p>Urban Studies Department of Regional and Urban Studies (DIST), Politecnico di Torino</p> <p>Guest lecturer. Course held by prof. F. Governa This guest lecture for master students in Architecture focused on the planetary dimension of urbanization patterns, covering debates on city-country relations, urban metabolism and extended urbanization through the reconstruction of theoretical lineages and the analysis of empirical case studies.</p>
	2019-2020	<p>Urban Studies Department of Regional and Urban Studies (DIST), Politecnico di Torino</p> <p>Teaching assistant. Course held by prof. F. Governa This guest lecture for master students in Architecture focused on the planetary dimension of urbanization patterns, covering debates on city-country relations, urban metabolism and extended urbanization through the reconstruction of theoretical lineages and the analysis of empirical case studies.</p>
	2018-2019	<p>Urban Economics Department of Regional and Urban Studies (DIST), Politecnico di Torino</p> <p>Teaching assistant. Course held by prof. L. Buzzacchi This assistance position in an interdepartmental course at the Bachelor level has involved both lecturing on the subject of urban political economy, supporting the students in the course empirical exercises and marking through the final examination.</p>
	2017-2018	<p>Urban Economics Department of Regional and Urban Studies (DIST), Politecnico di Torino</p> <p>Teaching assistant. Course held by prof. L. Buzzacchi This assistance position in an interdepartmental course at the Bachelor level has involved both lecturing on the subject of urban political economy, supporting the students in the course empirical exercises and marking through the final examination.</p>
	2012-2013	<p>Urban and Architectural Design Department of Architecture and Design (DAD), Politecnico di Torino</p> <p>Teaching assistant. Course held by arch. M. Ortalli My involvement in this course consisted in completing design crits with BA level students in Architecture in order to review and support their work-in-progress designs.</p>
Presentations	2023	<p>"It's a shithole, but we are still here". Ecologie politiche urbane lungo la Nuova Via della Seta a Pireo, Grecia Paper presentation. <i>IV Edizione delle Giornate di Studi Interdisciplinari "GEOGRAFIA E..." - Geografia e Ecologia Politica</i>. Milan, Italy.</p>
	2023	<p>Enclaves and borders. A walking ethnography of Silk Road urbanisation in Piraeus, Greece Paper presentation. <i>Silk road Cities and Beyond International Workshop</i>. Barcelona, Spain.</p>
	2022	<p>Questioning Asian urbanism: grounding the Belt and Road Initiative in Piraeus, Greece Paper presentation. <i>The 10th East Asian Regional Conference in Alternative Geography</i>. Taipei, Taiwan (online).</p>
	2022	<p>On the shores of tidal development. A grounded analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative in Piraeus, Greece Workshop presentation. <i>Comparative dialogues on the infrastructure-led urbanization of Global China</i> Malmö, Sweden.</p>
	2022	<p>Infrastructural afterlives. Genealogies of corridor urbanism in the making of the Lithium Triangle Invited seminar. <i>Urbanism + Landscape Week 2022 - Calibrating Thresholds</i>. Delft, The Netherlands.</p>
	2021	<p>Hinterlands of the Green Transition Paper presentation. <i>EXALT Conference 2021 - Concurrent Crises and Sustainable Futures: Global Extractivisms and Alternatives</i>. Helsinki, Finland (online).</p>
	2021	<p>Atacama: le infrastrutture della città a zero emissioni Invited seminar. <i>Spazi di contaminazione- Seminari di geografia critica</i>. University of Bologna, Italy (online).</p>
	2020	<p>Extractivismo y Logística en América Latina Roundtable. <i>V Congreso de Estudios Poscoloniales - VII Jornadas de Feminismo Poscolonial</i> Buenos Aires, Argentina (online).</p>
	2020	<p>Where the veil remains: preclusion as method in follow-the-thing research Paper presentation. <i>RGS-IBG 2020: On methods of thing-following</i> London, UK (canceled due to covid-19 pandemic).</p>
	2020	<p>Development at the big finance-microfinance nexus: a political ecology of the Cauchari Solar plant, Argentina Paper presentation. <i>NECS 2020: Transitions: Moving Images and Bodies</i>. Palermo, Italy (canceled due to</p>

covid-19 pandemic).

2020

Lithium: Exploring the frontiers of urbanization

Invited seminar. *Department of the Arts, Alma Mater Studiorum*. Bologna, Italy.

2019

Green cities and extractive hinterlands: on the urban infrastructure of commodity production

Paper presentation. *Infrastructural Futures across Cities of the Global North Workshop*. Manchester, UK.

2019

Urbanization along the li-ion network

Paper presentation. *Annual Meeting of American Geographers*. Washington, DC.

2019

Lavoro, Spazio, Movimenti

Paper presentation. *XV Coloquio de Geocrítica*. Barcelona, Spain.

Languages

Italian mother tongue

English excellent

French excellent

Spanish good

Software

Code Latex, markdown, html

Office Word, Excel, Powerpoint

Adbode InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Premiere

Last updated: \today