



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI BERGAMO



Institut für Landes-
und Stadtentwicklungs-
forschung

Curricular Internship Project

FINAL REPORT OF THE INTERNSHIP ACTIVITY

Degree course in:

GEOURBANISTICA (LM-48)

Student: **Nicole Passoni**

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End date: April 25, 2025

Academic year 2024/2025

Academic tutor

Emanuele Garda

Host institution tutor

Stefano Cozzolino

During the months of March and April 2025, I had the opportunity to carry out a curricular internship at *ILS – Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsforschung*, based in Dortmund, Germany. It was a very enriching educational experience, which allowed me to engage with an international context, closely observe urban regeneration projects—some completed and others still in progress—and actively participate in the team's daily activities.

The decision to undertake the internship in Dortmund stemmed from a twofold motivation. On one hand, my interest in the theme of urban regeneration, particularly in post-industrial contexts where the presence of water is a fundamental and necessary factor; on the other, the desire to get in touch with an international research environment, to broaden my academic and professional horizons. Dortmund represents an emblematic case of a city in transformation, with numerous urban recovery and reconversion projects. In particular, the *Hafen Speicherstraße* district, the subject of my case study, is undergoing a very interesting renewal process—a transformation that is seeing the emergence of new and lively functions within a context historically occupied by traditional industry.

The center where I carried out the internship aims to understand urbanization processes through active dialogue with professionals, policymakers, and local stakeholders. Research at ILS is conducted by three research groups and the Department of Geoinformation and Monitoring. It brings together researchers, PhD candidates, and professionals from different countries and disciplines. The department in which I worked is the Department of Spatial Planning and Urban Design, directed by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Thomas Weith. The work environment turned out to be stimulating and dynamic, characterized by strong interdisciplinarity and a focus on networking.

During my internship, I worked closely with my tutor Stefano Cozzolino on a research project dedicated to the urban regeneration of the *Hafen Speicherstraße* district, a transforming area located along the city's harbor canal. The work was divided into several phases, with the aim of building an in-depth analysis of the case study and contributing to the definition of a scientific publication. The guiding structure of our work is a project document that defines the theoretical framework, research objectives, methodological steps, and the central question to be answered: "What urban regeneration approach can ensure that a "marginal neighborhood" can regenerate incrementally, by addition rather than replacement, while preserving and enhancing its identity?" The first phase of the project was dedicated to general research on the place and the *Hafen Speicherstraße* regeneration project, collecting technical materials, urban plans, official statements, maps, and historical information. This analysis made it possible to contextualize the district within its historical-industrial background, observing its evolution and current role within Dortmund's urban system. Subsequently, an in-depth literature review was conducted, focused on texts and articles related to the three fundamental principles of Jane Jacobs, useful for the discussion phase of the data. The core of the research is represented by the analysis of the *Hafen Speicherstraße* case study and the related urban regeneration project currently under development. To facilitate the analysis, we built thematic databases aimed at systematically recording: the functions envisaged in the masterplan and in already completed interventions; the activities already present in the area: cultural spaces, restaurants, offices, public services; the functional and spatial relationships between the different components. These data were then used to create thematic maps, produced with GIS software, which highlight the functional composition of the district, its transformation, and its potential as a neighborhood characterized by a good functional mix, open to all and resilient. We also asked ourselves how this transformation is perceived by users of the neighborhood and to what extent the theoretical principles we studied are reflected in lived reality. To concretely answer these questions, the need emerged to collect qualitative data directly from stakeholders. We are currently working on the design of two questionnaires: one addressed to professionals and researchers in the field of urban planning, to be distributed within the institute; a second, more general questionnaire, aimed at residents, workers, business operators, and cultural centers active in or frequenting the neighborhood. The goal is to

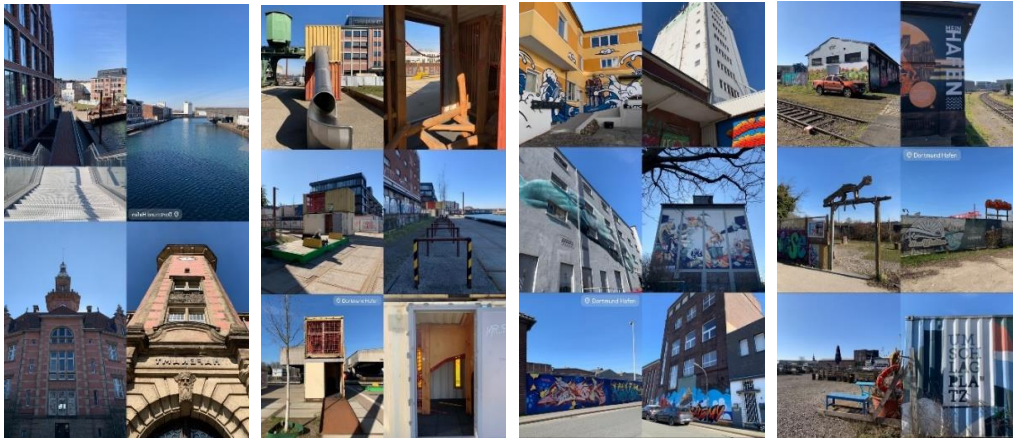
collect direct data on the perception of the transformation, on the identity of the place, on the strengths and weaknesses experienced by the various “city users.” This information will be essential to refine the analysis and provide a complete view of the case study, combining theoretical approach, spatial observation, and community feedback.

This internship allowed me to experience a complete urban research process, from the collection and systematization of sources, to critical analysis, to the construction of tools for qualitative investigation. A concrete experience that consolidated my skills and strengthened my interest in the theme of urban regeneration and applied research. I also improved my ability in territorial analysis and became more familiar with documentary and cartographic sources, despite the language barriers. On a personal level, I learned to work in close collaboration with an experienced professional, to manage time and priorities, and to communicate in an international professional context with various actors.

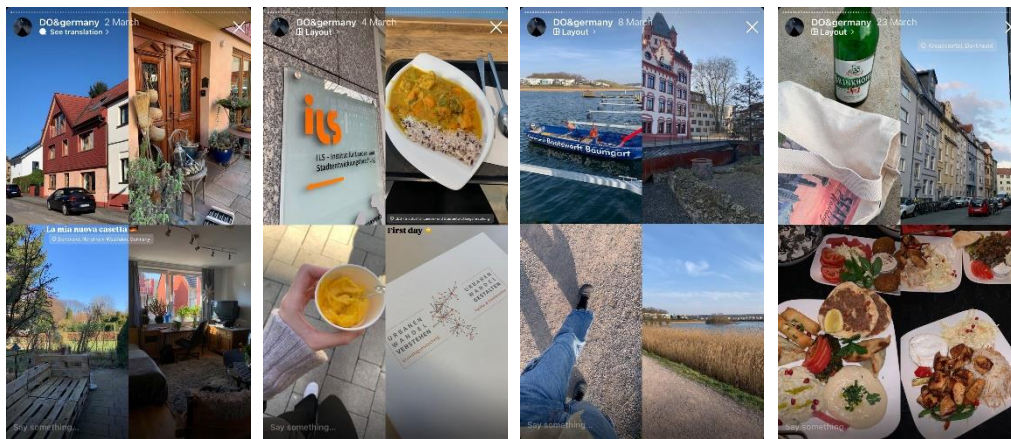
Living in Dortmund for two months was an important added value. The city, although not among the most renowned in Germany, managed to surprise me with its energy and vibrancy, its multi-ethnic neighborhoods, and its vast green lungs. Adaptation was easy, thanks also to a good transport service network. Even outside of work, I had the chance to explore the city, visit museums, local markets, parks, and places of gathering typical of the inhabitants, further enriching my experience.

The internship in Dortmund was a highly valuable educational experience, which allowed me to challenge myself in a new context, apply the skills acquired during my university studies, and develop new ones, useful both in view of my thesis and for my future professional career. It was also an important moment of personal growth, in which I learned to move independently, to relate to different realities, and to seize learning opportunities that arise outside the classroom. In conclusion, I consider this experience a valuable piece of my academic journey and a starting point for future professional developments in the field of urban planning and applied territorial research.

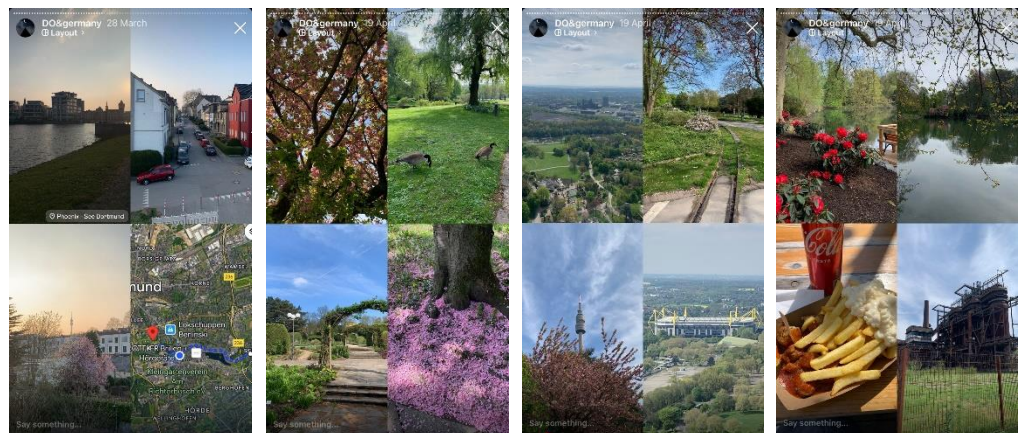
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Stefano Cozzolino, my internship tutor, for the constant support and availability shown throughout the entire process. His attentive guidance, timely feedback, and valuable insights were a fundamental reference for improving my work step by step. His professional advice, always clear and constructive, was a concrete opportunity for personal and educational growth. A special thanks goes to Prof. Emanuele Garda, without whom I would not have had the opportunity to discover this international reality and live such a stimulating experience, and heartfelt thanks to Prof. Alessandra Ghisalberti, chair of the *Geourbanistica* course for the opportunity of internationalization. I also sincerely thank Prof. Thomas Weith, head of the department, for welcoming my application and allowing me to join the research team, making this internship possible. A heartfelt thanks to Jutta Nordholt, who accompanied me with care and attention from the beginning, guiding me through various organizational aspects and making this experience smooth and positive in every way. Finally, I thank all the researchers and collaborators of the institute for their warm welcome and for sharing moments of dialogue, exchange, and discussion with me. The informal conversations, the advice, and the availability shown made this experience even richer and more meaningful.



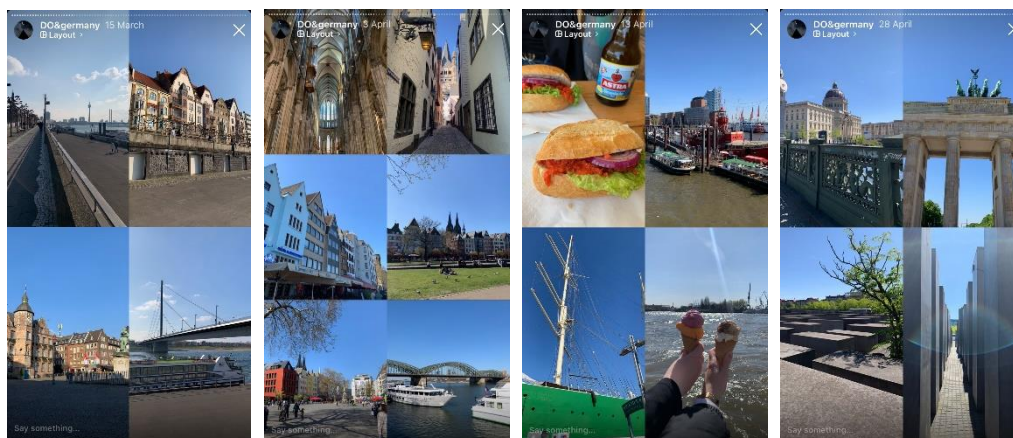
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