The aim of the research was to investigate, collect, and analyze Italian documentary production between 1948 and 1968, where the landscape of the southern regions is depicted and portrayed. The research aimed to analyze how the cinematic image of the southern landscape was conceived during this significant phase in the history of Italy and Italian cinema. Through the selection, analysis, and study of various types of documentary materials from audiovisual archives located across Italy, the research focused on how the landscape was represented through images and narratives and on the signs of transformations and changes in life practices, as well as the memory and perception of the South. In particular, the research focused on a period when some of the most important geographical, cultural, political, and economic transformations of Republican Italy occurred, especially in the South.

This period corresponds, among other things, to a time when our cinema (both art-house and genre) gained enormous artistic strength, an awareness of its role within world film production, as well as great international success.

The work on archives and the possibility of analyzing films that have not been the subject of previous research was a chance to use a new methodology and open an important field of research with enormous potential for the study of our country’s cultural identity. Each unit carried out and studied a selection of the audiovisual archival material, based on the thematic pairs that articulate the project and that were used to divide and analyze the collected material -Interior/Exterior, a thematic pair investigated by the research unit of the Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples; Speed/Slowness, investigated by the unit in Palermo; Land/Sea, investigated by the unit in Calabria; Myth/Narrative, investigated by the unit in Catania. In this initial phase, the work was also structured in multiple directions: identification of physical and/or virtual archives to be examined; access to materials; cataloging of materials through specific in-depth cards; organization of a shared database accessible through one of the access
The creation of the database as a common working platform allowed each research unit to access materials relevant to the chosen theme. These materials were then available to the researchers involved for the development of the themes of all research units. In the last year, the goal of each unit was to develop the chosen theme through the available materials and through continuous comparison with the work of the other groups. This process took place through seminars, conferences, symposiums, and publications (two books and numerous essays published in journals and collective volumes), as well as through artistic reuse practices of archival material: a documentary, created by the research unit in Palermo in collaboration with the Experimental Cinematography Center - Palermo Branch, was produced in the final phase of the research. The showcase website (https://www.archividelsud.com/) and the research platform “Sguardi del sud” (https://www.memoryscapes.it/it/serie/28_sguardi-del-sud) were further outcomes of the research. Other editing works of audiovisual materials are planned as part of the dissemination of the research results, following its conclusion.