

# Methodological Guidelines for Metropolitan Cartography Projects. Mapping the Accumulation of Contested Territories in Southern Latitudes Metropolitan Cities

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## *Abstract*

The field of research is in South America, where the cultural logic of colonialism still persists and manifests in the form of colonial heritage. The research deals with the physical dimension of the metropolis. Considering the challenges of climate change and growing socio-economic inequalities, we verify the methodology of Metropolitan Cartography as a tool that allows us to represent the values of contested territories and see how dynamic metropolitan transformations on the space-time map can be combined with the interstitial worlds of local communities: *otros saberes*. Through mapping projects, the task of metropolitan architecture in *southern latitude* cities is to construct a new form of metropolitan urban life and strengthen a feeling of adequacy between places and inhabitants. The research issue relates to the way in which indigenous populations can tune *other values* brought by globalisation to the practices of their remote past, their *values*.

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Cosmopolitan globalisation, or new colonialism, does not enable places to retain past urban individualities, and indeed reinterpret them on a different scale rather than according to their own context.

*An alternative model to cosmopolitan globalisation for the metropolitan regions of South America*

A syntactic transformation is taking place in the city today. Cosmopolitan globalisation, or new colonialism, does not enable places to retain past urban individualities, and indeed reinterpret them on a different scale rather than according to their own context.

We are striving for a possible alternative model of development for territories, regions and metropolitan cities in “colonial” and “non-colonial” countries, which can qualify democracy as a concept of generalised, participatory and relational power shared on an equal footing, built by a plurality of actors (Cavarero, 2019) with the common and shared aim of defending the environment and share knowledge.

The relationship between space, memory and representation in the digital age has grown strongly due to their pervasive representation by means of new technologies, whether rooted in daily cultural experiences, ancestral times or both. Therefore, the topography for exploring the city requires the development of methods, tools and experiments to re-code the metropolitan territory. For this reason, we use the most recent mapping technologies in Metropolitan Cartography (MC).

The main field of research and practice are the metropolitan areas of Latin America, where the cultural logic of colonialism still persists. In particular, we are concerned with the physical dimension of formerly colonised territories.

Focusing on five Latin American countries with contested spaces (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Colombia) compared to European contexts (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom), the research network of the European project Contested Territories Horizon 2020 responds to the challenges inherent in post-colonial territorial development by offering collaborative and situated knowledge between indigenous people and new citizens in the metropolitan territory.

Latin America is the most urbanised and unequal region of the global South (UN-Habitat, 2020), where disadvantaged communities, indigenous people and especially women have experienced dramatic levels of systematic violence and exclusion. In this context, we study the risks that affect society, space and territorial

cohesion, but which also activate community organisation (Svampa, 2015).

Europe has viewed the Latin American conflict as a civil and collective resistance to radical democracy (Butler, 2017), a kind of creative and insurrectional violence characterised by a commitment to radicalise the very idea of democratic thinking in terms of permanent conflict and battlefields (Mouffe, 2007). From this resistance, we learn a way to question ourselves regarding *otros saberes* (Delgado, Ruiz, 2014), local territorial intelligence that is cancelled by the metropolitan dimension that implements transformations according to an extractivist and colonialist approach on every continent.

Urbanisation under the pretext of development and progress continues to be the primary mechanism that determines the spatial and economic expropriation of the colonised territories (Porter, Yiftachel, 2017). We try to understand how local cultures, as a form of resistance to the practices of colonialism, shape, negotiate, imagine and manage their environments in a collaborative way (De Sousa Santos, 2018) and how this “other knowledge” can be translated into the metropolitan dimension of the city today. The colonial matrix always manifests itself on the territory through three predominant actions: *segregation, extractivism and control*. Acting in a perspective of de-colonialisation, our approach was applied in the implementation of an open data mapping tool; we named it MC. The MC mapping project follows an interpretation of the codes that represent the phenomenon of metropolisation through an epistemological approach that states the logical reasons for choosing open-source data.

#### *The impact of metropolitanisation on local territorial intelligence*

As designers, we contextualise the contrast between territorial intelligence and metropolitanisation by studying the impact of metropolitan projects tied to regional infrastructure on the local scale. With this lens, the metropolis is seen as a system that enables complementary actions – maintenance tactics to preserve, improvement strategies to increase, and transformation opportunities to grow – to work with local projects, scaling them up. The metropolis is a relational system that connects places to each other by means of territories and resources.

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Fig. 1 - Rural Religious Architecture in the pueblo of Asunción, Mendoza (AR), Galiulo, V., 2019.

Fig. 2 - *Naturaleza y Infraestructura*: Grey Infrastructure looming over dry Mendoza River. Re-appropriation of natural space for children's playgrounds in the pueblo of Asunción, Mendoza (AR), Galiulo, V., 2019.

In order to define a metropolitan architecture project, we argue that the interaction between the morphological, material and discursive dimensions shapes the sense of corporeality as a structure of the habitat. Beyond constituting the green-grey metropolitan structure, the task of the metropolitan architecture project is to construct memorable, desirable and affective scenes as a new form of metropolitan urbanity to strengthen mutual connectedness between places and inhabitants. This issue relates to the possibility of hybridising resilience priorities in cities in southern latitude countries. The gap between values that do not conform to conventional modernity and values that are now shared globally, yet are opposite of local practices, matters in ecological concerns. Indeed, technology makes the metropolis more functional, in the sense that technological performance in city spaces can affect inhabitants' behaviour and particularly indigenous communities, but technology can also be a robust vehicle to replicate non-sustainable practices. This is why we claim that cosmopolitan globalisation is a colonial phenomenon that risks cancelling the voice of local territorial intelligence. Decolonisation of knowledge (Mignolo, 2021) allowed for the survival of indigenous peoples in territories that





were not simply dominated, but resisted by hybridising, mixing and overcoming differences, breaking the imposed position of difference with European culture through boundary-thinking. Escobar argues that space is generated by the interplay between the ethics of world-making and the politics of social existence, and he suggests bringing procedural and relational ethics into design itself and in everything we do (Escobar, 2018).

However, spatial conflicts arise not only from cultural differences, but also by “othering” different forms of dwelling and values that regulate social life with reference to space, economy, ecology, property, body and knowledge.

Aníbal Quijano has defined “the colonial difference” as the result of conflicting cultural interchange, or frictions between local knowledge and Western paradigms (Quijano, 1992a). The “colonial difference” is the space in which power is articulated, but it is a space where “borderline thinking” emerges.

As designer-actors in contemporary society, our project aims to implement the works of metropolitan architecture that define new urban-rural linkage patterns in interphase territories. It deciphers urban and rural patterns and practices from the past to maintain

**Spatial conflicts arise not only from cultural differences, but also by “othering” different forms of dwelling and values that regulate social life with reference to space, economy, ecology, property, body and knowledge.**

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or transform them. The goal is to re-codify the city model on the metropolitan scale, which constitutes the pertinent horizon of languages and meanings between all city temporalities. Who will the new citizens be? How will tribal practices and techniques fit together? This is the question lying at the heart of MC.

#### *The Tool: Space / Metropolitan Map*

Through maps, Western culture has tried to manifest its world by expressing the sense of power that seeks to make the world a system of entities at our disposal, to be dominated by logos. It is as if our maps are produced according to a code that makes the world more decipherable.

With the aim of mapping fragile territories, other cartographies are needed to describe and guide future transformations in metropolitan areas following an alternative model to cosmopolitan globalisation.

MC (Contin et al., 2021) is an open-source mapping tool that can be used in territories affected by the metropolitan dynamics of globalisation. The map is a way of seeing the world and is necessarily built through a code of communication and mediation. As in language (Moro, 2008), maps have a logical structure that is tied to grammar – the structure of this code, the primitive elements it is composed of (MGIP) – and syntax – the rules of composition that transmit the information to be communicated.

MC results from the revolution of what is symbolic. It is a tool developed from the need to understand new forms of life and relationships through contact and the multiplication of knowledge, which allows each culture to open up through the search for what makes us similar and not different.

This process feeds on the experience of building literary, filmic, photographic and theatrical images for determining the image of a territory to be explored.

It works as a qualitative mapping project for metropolises through a powerful evocative image (Mangani, 2006), which conceptualises new-generation maps capable of critically analysing the complex physical and temporal aspects of new territories across the different scales. The maps of MC enable stratified knowledge to be understood and translated to produce new 'sensitive' images through GIS-scalable and replicable projects. MC re-codes the spaces in local communities

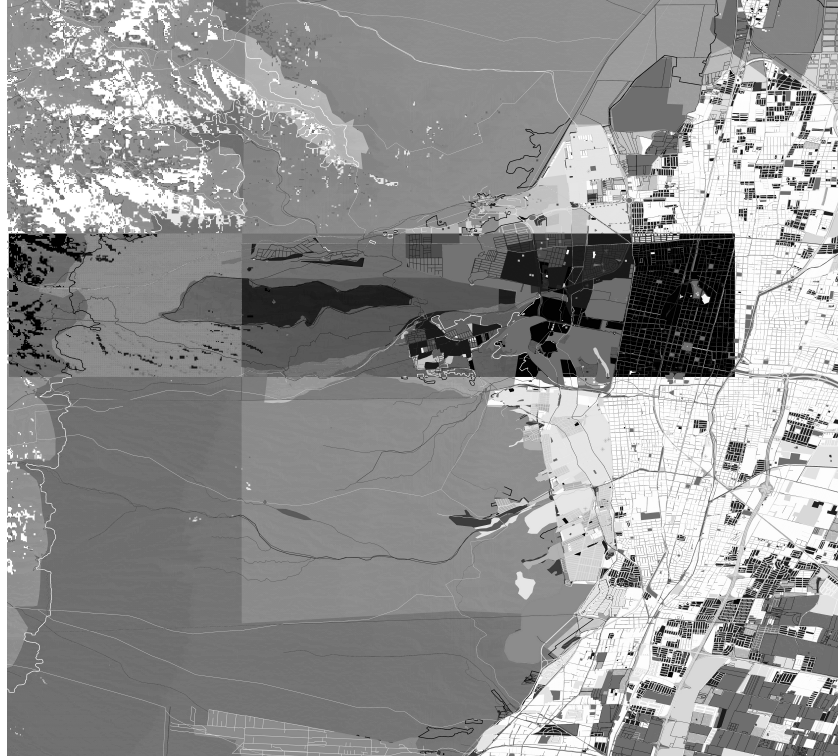


Fig. 3 - Metropolitan  
Cartography map  
of field of action:  
Pedemonte Mendo-  
za, Galiulo, V. 2019.

based on the continuity of the green-grey infrastruc-  
ture, that is, the non-densely urbanised part of the city  
(Gouverneur, 2016).

Our cartography aims to break the colonial consolida-  
tion of places through a psycho-cognitive alteration of  
the space inserted in a new metropolitan dimension.  
The question is: What will remain of the image of the  
previously known place that the local populations  
have built in their minds when inserted into the im-  
age of a metropolitan city?

*Hypertext as a tool for reading the “Contested Territo-  
ries” metropolitan project*

The methodological research began with the intent  
to include intangible aspects of contested territorial  
landscapes in the map-making process. With grow-  
ing acknowledgement of the role of different social  
groups and citizens’ interest in dealing with the me-  
tropolis and heritage, there is an increasingly strong  
need to recognise, analyse and connect narratives and  
images of metropolitan dimensions, including social  
values and immaterial aspects even on the metropoli-  
tan scale.

In the context of discourse on the metropolis, a met-  
ropolitan territory can be read in a nonlinear way.

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A metropolitan project such as a map aims to define a space with collective and public dimensions using new hybrid urban forms. In order to build a gradient of metropolitan spaces and define their functional and symbolic values and forms, it is necessary to develop new syntax and grammar for the design.

A hypertext concept, as a set of documents placed in relation to each other, can be helpful for understanding the metropolitan issue regarding the individual choices among a wide range of related elements (Contin, 2018). A metropolitan project such as a map aims to define a space with collective and public dimensions using new hybrid urban forms. In order to build a gradient of metropolitan spaces and define their functional and symbolic values and forms, it is necessary to develop new syntax and grammar for the design.

On the metropolitan, urban and architectural scales, the non-planned extension of the metropolitan city could also represent a driver of research for possible planning of metropolitan urban life that must necessarily mark a discontinuity with the traditional and colonial city and further discuss what metropolitan values mean.

Therefore, our research explores three themes:

- 1) the interference between the practices of urban dwellers and public policies in urban planning and management;
- 2) the relationships between the spaces produced by the practices of city dwellers and those claimed by public authorities;
- 3) city images.

Our objective is to re-code the city and territory model on the metropolitan scale, which may allow for the recognition of meanings in the debate between colonial and de-colonial, clarifying the explicit framework within which what is non-planned according to mainstream urban rules remains traceable in the metropolitan idea. We primarily need to understand the matrix that holds together the different cities that form the metropolitan city region, arguing for its structural representation by means of the maps in MC.

The colonial world introduced a concept of property that overlapped with that of indigenous communities. Furthermore, colonial domination added exogenous meanings concerning the indigenous inhabitants of the city which is not planned according to formalised urban planning tools. Yet, we argue that there were different maps and rules before, which need to be rediscovered.

Finally, using maps, the physical dimension of “Contested Territories” unveils the dimension of the inter-

nal borders of “non-planned” city neighbourhoods. Such shared reading with local inhabitants introduces other spatial construction values (heritage), as well as different ontologies and epistemologies. On the other hand, signs related to the archetypes of colonial land management follow two dynamic strategies: inclusion or exclusion up to land abandonment.

#### *Settling “Contested Territories” through a metropolitan architecture meta-project*

“Contested Territories” are crossed by different global rationales, for which we must not lose sight of the territorial intersections on a local, metropolitan and regional level. These are territories of globalisation and spaces of intervention of multi-scale agents that interact with local narratives.

The metropolitan discipline approach to complexity (Contin et al., 2021) promotes metropolitan architecture meta-projects as tools of negotiation among different metropolitan agents. A metropolitan architecture meta-project is based not only on the economic and energy efficiency of territory, but also on defining the structural “strong texts” of the regional dimension (Frampton, 1983); it considers the inter-texts of local realities that lie between powerful metropolitan regions.

MC maps and metropolitan architecture meta-projects, potentially, provide government authorities in Latin American countries with means for decision-making that capacitate integration and ways of living for local communities, advocating innovative models of spatial connection between urban and rural areas that make place for new metropolitan communities. What is *variable* on the local scale is then recognised and preserved in order to become *invariant* on the global scale, therefore disarming the notion of the metropolis as a generic city (Koolhaas, 2006).

#### *Metropolitan Cartography project guidelines*

The Contested Territories Horizon 2020 European research project will resume in June 2022, after the pandemic brought it to a halt, with fact-finding for context-based data construction to verify initial methodological assumptions. Critical observations of territorial development, from the XL to the M scale, were elaborated from the new global open-source

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## What are the tools for envisioning and the measurement indices of an affective space (if any)?

data mapping concept with MC methodology, and would not have emerged had we used more common, conventional systems.

However, only by comparing our results with local agents can we define how the recognition and translation of ancestral knowledges into our project methodology and the knowledge of cultural, political and economic innovation models can be culturally relevant for prefiguring metropolitan architecture projects for metropolitan cities at southern latitudes.

The first mapping project phase defines the temporalisation of construction periods in the metropolitan city represented through MC (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods). Recognition of the geographical, historical, social and anthropological characteristics of the political ecology of the metropolitan context is the next step, in order to study the impact on indigenous/traditional cultural sites and practices of the pervasive presence of physical infrastructure, media and representational technologies associated with rampant urbanisation processes.

### *Dataactivism: new construction and cataloguing of S, XS hyperlocal data*

What are the tools for envisioning and the measurement indices of an affective space (if any)? It is the space of a reflective subject who can express what the situation requires, but not a space that allows us to normo-typify the subject. It cannot be measured with a performance map or simulation tools. We therefore have to consider which tool allows us to identify the characteristics of the space that stimulate our criticality and reflexivity.

This is not a question of determining the programmatic requirements, however, but rather a subject of qualities and values represented by the tangible and intangible heritage between culture and nature. To enlighten this, we recognise and appreciate both past and emerging structures to support the construction of a sustainable metropolitan city through the compatibility of green and grey infrastructures.

We propose to work with the MC tool to promote the construction of local data directly with citizens. Through collaboration with experts in data-telling and GIS projects, we identified five operational categories of dataactivism.



- Community counter-mapping in intercultural communication:

Use of drawing and sound in a psychogeographical approach. This is the power of creating a place, through colour, relationship and history, with the maps providing instructions on how to get home.

- Decolonisation and geo-activism in extractivism:

Definition of a communication strategy using data, practices and spatial tools. Mapping is a complex repertoire of resistance practices to mining projects and a tool for political negotiations with the state. Maps can generate alternative digital public spheres; geo-activism as proactive data activism employs strategies to communicate actions.

- Civic technologies in community-based conservation:

In participatory planning, civic technologies are tools to generate data in a collective way. This is a pedagogical tool for communities to collect spatial data, which are used in the diagnosis and planning phase. It constitutes the information base of the monitoring system; provides updated information to create implementation actions on the territory; influences public policies; and promotes conscious conservation actions;

- Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDG): data sovereignty is the management of information that aligns with the laws, practices and customs of a state, nation, and indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples have always been data collectors and protectors. IDS and IDG imply the right of indigenous peoples and nations to decide what data development occurs and determine controls over the collection, governance, ownership and application of data on their peoples, territories, ways of life and natural resources;

- Designing the “Contested Territories” repository (open database and open science): definitions of activation protocols for specific data collection in the field. This defines tools and services for data collection, distribution and analysis. It establishes data ethics and data governance for collectives in contested territories.

Mapping is a complex repertoire of resistance practices to mining projects and a tool for political negotiations with the state.

*MESA: Metropolitan Existing Situation Analysis*

In order to map the spatial and temporal dynamics that underlie the effects of metropolitanisation in

## Maps of Dynamics

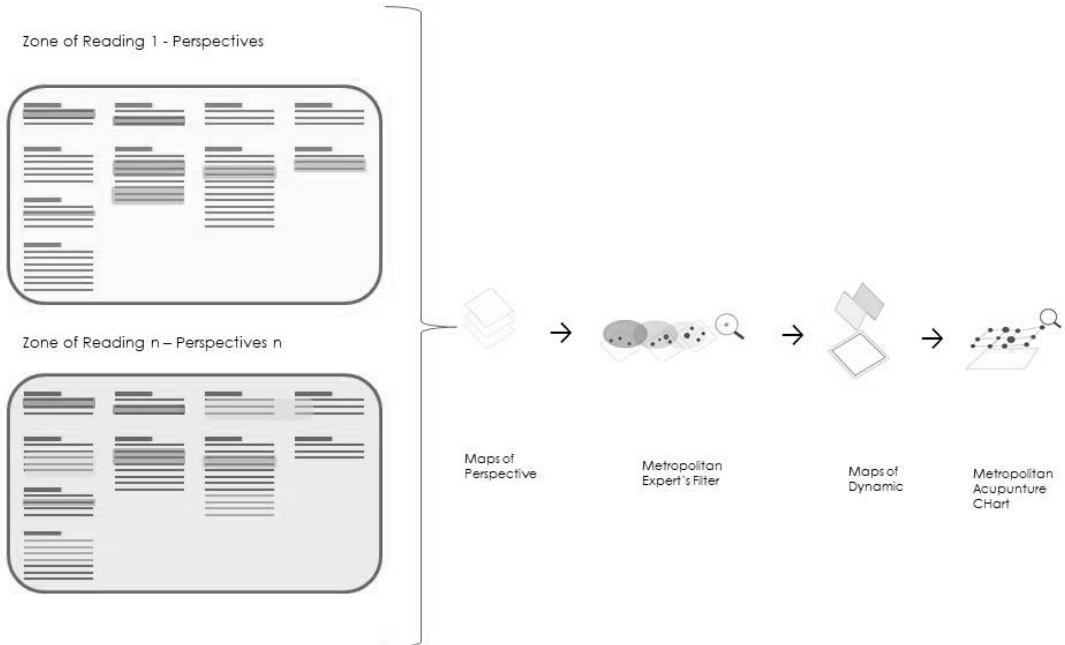


Fig. 4 - Metropolitan Cartography maps of dynamic design processes with local intelligence perspectives, Contin, A., Galiulo, V., 2019.

contested territories, MESA guidelines consist of the following methodological tracks:

- Historical City-Territory Analysis: this is a sensitive and crucial phase in multidimensional research on the city and its territory which includes symbol, memory and image considered as physical references and the syntactical spatial investigation of the territorial evolution. It includes typological-morphological relationships in the historical contexts; it is the structure of the durable element of the territory based on urban biographies (Contin, Galiulo, 2020), genesis and geomorphology of the settlement fabrics. The expected outcome is a collection of maps, videos and photo reports;
- Network analysis and infrastructure relationship spaces: this is a practical-theoretical step in analytical research aimed at marking multi-scale relationships with multiple proximities to the different types of networks starting from the regional scale;
- Geographical analysis of the territory: this is a moment of investigation dedicated to evidence of the



geomorphological dimension of the ground. It involves research into the anthropogeographic system, considering relationships between valleys (water) and neighbourhoods (ground). Therefore the research lens will be focused according to the metabolic structure of the project concerning design actions on the hyperlocal scale: maintenance, replacement, transformation;

- Landscape and environmental analysis: an analytical study covering the characteristics of natural, anthropic landscapes and the image value of local spatial relationships in the territorial fabric: invariant characteristics as symbolic values of the project site;
- Economic analysis: this aims to define contested eco-systems according to the existing dynamics of territorial extractivism due to intensive agricultural overproduction that erases traces of rural landscape as the essence of a quality lifestyle. This phase should be crossed with marketing analysis designed to detect economic and social variables to identify the future economic potential of the network of metropolitan spaces.

Fig. 5 - Photo  
reportage: Historical  
city analysis in the  
field of state-owned  
neighbourhoods.  
Galiulo, V., 2019.

Spatial components of the territories and territorialities that were lost in the advance of peripheralisation of the rural arid land were translated as two primary metropolitan dynamics.

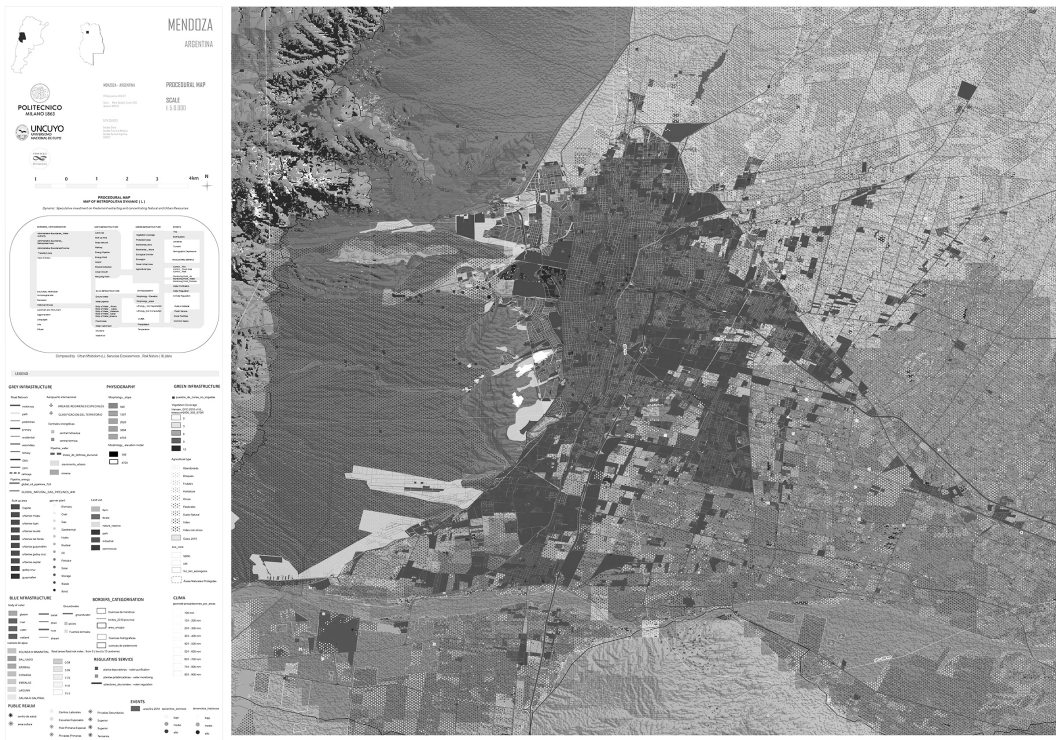
The MESA methodology tracks direct open-source data mining to construct MC maps. These guidelines are followed by practical-theoretical work in which informational levels are transformed into synthetic data through the following steps: data mining, data setting and data semiology according to the MC methodology (Contin et al, 2022). To support the data search phase, MC allows for the selection of the connectivity relationships necessary for representing a specific ground phenomenon through multi-scale maps. MC guides the planner in acquiring and filtering data to facilitate the construction of a replicable, comparable and scalable model in heterogeneous metropolitan contexts. The digital design processes of MC guide the planner in modelling the data following an initial analysis and interpretation of the information layers with respect to scalar relationships and the programmatic purpose of the map.

*Maps of dynamics: the choral result of local intelligence*

During the pandemic, we completed the first phase of analysis of one of the case studies chosen through the tools of MC and our analysis method (Contin, Galiulo 2021): the case of Mendoza, in which urban uses expansion into rural areas resulted in more barren lands. Framing the problem through the different narratives of local agents allowed us to characterise the metropolitan processes and territorial transformations in Mendoza. This relates to rural peripheralisation through a phenomenon of horizontal and vertical extractivism (Katz, 2016), which has caused the rise of disputes over water access (Mellino, 2014). Spatial components of the territories and territorialities that were lost in the advance of peripheralisation of the rural arid land were translated as two primary metropolitan dynamics and a sub-dynamics into the MC maps of dynamics on the XL, L and M scales. These are:

- Dynamic 1: Peripheralisation of the city causing lack of territorial identity and access to services;
- Dynamic 2: Conflict between traditional lifestyle and modern lifestyle in the mountains.

The cartographic representation of metropolitan extractivism dynamics in the rural Pedemonte area of Mendoza on the local scale (Fig. 6) is the synthetic result of spatial relationships under the categories of social inequality and lack of proximity to the ecosystem and cultural services of the metropolitan city.



Furthermore, the parcelling of the territory into neighbourhoods (private and with limited/regular or informal access) limits the equitable distribution and accessibility of resources, thereby increasing the social gap between rich and poor. Private neighbourhoods are regarded as introverted islands equipped with safety devices that include areas for public use conceived as complementary spaces where inhabitants can experience the new open city. However, beyond the security barriers of private neighbourhoods, there are more than 166 informal and working-class neighbourhoods in the suburban metropolitan area, most notably in the municipalities of Las Heras, Mendoza City and Godoy Cruz. These are places with critical levels of insecurity and a total lack of primary services related to the public drinking water supply to meet the daily needs of the population residing in the foothills, favouring capitalisation of the public good by global private enterprises. In conclusion, MC arises from the need to represent the complexity of the metropolitan approach through maps. Research on different territories, cultures,

Fig. 6 - Metropolitan Cartography. Mendoza (AR) - Dynamic Map 1- Scale L, Galiulo, V. 2019.



agents and scales means determining a method of study that can guarantee a territorial structure of organization that emerges from preliminary anthropo-geographic research to decode new hybrid metropolitan situations. The results show how MC operates through an ecosystem approach that allows territories to be integrated on different scales, which is made possible by managing water and soil resources, promoting their conservation and sustainable use and maintaining the local culture of the territory and its resources. It is a proposal for a theoretical-practical approach to guarantee an inter-scalar leap, from small to large and vice versa, indicating new possible projects of urban-rural linkage models as places of relationships for the new metropolitan coexistence.

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